THE WORLD'S EPOCH MAKERS
EDITED BY OLIPHANT SMEATON

Cranmer and The English Reformation

By

A D INNES M.A

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By Arthur D. Innes, M.A.

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this volume is not so much to present a biography of Cranmer as to give a sketch of that ecclesiastical period throughout which he remains a consistently prominent figure: a period during which he, more than any other single individual, left his personal impress upon a national institution.

It is a peculiarity of the Reformation in England that it is not associated with any one figure of heroic proportions. Germany has her Luther; the Netherlands, William the Silent; Calvin dominated half the Protestant world, and more; Knox, dour and grim as he was, had no little of the heroic quality. In England neither Cranmer nor any other occupies a corresponding position. There is a sense in which the historian may legitimately speak of a person as having created a movement; but he may not say it of Cranmer. He does not absorb the interest while associates fall into the background; we feel that it is the mediocrity of his associates which enables him to absorb so much as he does.

This is apt to be the way with England. The Reformation has its political counterpart, not in the Great Rebellion with its Hampden and its Cromwell, but in

39086

the "Glorious Revolution" with its inglorious Whigs. To them we owe our constitutional liberties; and it is to men of a similar calibre that we owe our religious emancipation.

Amongst the various figures, however, Cranmer holds the position of pre-eminence. Our Reformation in the sixteenth century may be described as having had four stages. During the first there is a movement intellectual and moral, but legislation does not intervene. This closes in 1529. In the second stage the fundamental feature is the assertion of Secular supremacy over Ecclesiastical administration; in the third it is the revision of ecclesiastical ordinances. The fiery interlude of Mary's reign leads to the fourth stage—in effect the confirmation of the two preceding in a recognised and established system. The Reformation becomes an accomplished fact. From that time the body ecclesiastical, as recognised by the State, alters very little in character; any vigorous reforming movements thereafter, the lines of which extend beyond the scheme of the Elizabethan settlement, tending to result in separation from the established organisation rather than in changes within it.

In the first of these four stages Cranmer does not appear. He belonged to the movement, but he had no active part in it. In the second stage the leading figures are Henry VIII. and Thomas Cromwell: Cranmer fluttering through it, sometimes encouraging, generally acquiescent, occasionally offering a somewhat ineffective resistance, never more than an influence. In the third he is the controlling character; not indeed displaying a vigorous mastery, but on the whole successfully maintaining a position which but for him would

assuredly not have been maintained at the time nor accepted—as it was—in the fourth stage, when he had already earned the martyr's crown. In these two stages, the second and third, the work of the Reformation was wrought, and the course shaped which it should take in the future. It is right, therefore, that his should stand as the representative name. The first stage is in this volume treated as an extended prologue; the fourth only as epilogue.

The telling of this story involves certain difficulties. An attitude of enthusiasm would be pleasant; but for the most part the subject forbids enthusiasm. To play the advocate for a party is easy; but with Henry and Cromwell, Cranmer and Gardiner, Northumberland and Mary Tudor to depict, it is in no wise easy to "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice." It appears all but impossible to write of those times without yielding either to the Roman, the Anglican, or the Puritan bias. Till a comparatively recent period there was no hearing for any but the last school; of late years those Anglicans who reject the name of Protestant have held the field, save for some acute, if not always convincing, expositions of the Romanist point of view. It is hardly possible to make a single statement as to the beliefs, motives, intentions, or character of any one of our *dramatis personæ* which will not be quite honestly and quite flatly contradicted by the adherents of one or other of the three schools: so that the discovery of truth becomes a highly complicated process.

To this must be added a special perplexity—party terminology. Convenience brought about the practice of using the term Catholic as equivalent to Romanist,

and opposing it to the term Protestant. Then came a revival of "Catholic" in its wider and legitimate sense; but it was still maintained as a contrary to Protestant, the sense of which was narrowed till it became almost equivalent to Calvinist; and the two words have become party badges within a Church which is at once essentially Catholic in virtue of its continuity, and essentially Protestant in virtue of its Reformation.

I have attempted in these pages to revert to a legitimate use of these terms. The primary antagonism is between the Romanists, who maintained the papal authority, and the Protestants, who rejected it. The secondary antagonism is between the Catholics, who maintained the authority of tradition and the early Fathers, and the Puritans, who held by the words of Scripture. The Catholic may be either Romanist or Protestant. The Protestant may be either Puritan or Catholic. The mutually exclusive terms are, Romanist and Protestant, Puritan and Catholic.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES xiii

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE: UNREST

Pioneers of the Reformation—Europe in the Fifteenth Century—The New Learning—Savonarola—State of England—The *Supplicacyon for the Beggers*—Ecclesiastical Corruption—Its Causes—Special Conditions in England—Motive Force for Reformation 1

CHAPTER II

PROLOGUE: THE SCHOLARS' MOVEMENT, 1496–1529

Colet Lectures at Oxford—The New Method—Characteristics—Erasmus at Oxford—Colet Dean of St. Paul's—Accession of Henry VIII.—Erasmus and More—The *Utopia*—Religion in *Utopia*—Characteristics of the Scholars—The New Testament of Erasmus—The Extirpation of Heresy—Colet's Address to Convocation—The Reformation Intended 12

CHAPTER III

PROLOGUE: THE LUTHERAN REVOLT, 1517–1530

Luther and Erasmus—The Meaning of Luther—Luther and Tetzel—Luther and the Papal Bull—The Diet of Worms—The Edict of Worms—The Heads of the Christian States—The Peasants' War—The Papal Elections—Political Consequences—The Diet of Spires—The Sack of Rome—The Protest of Spires—The Schmalkaldic League, and After—The Zurich Reformers—The Augsburg Confession 23

CHAPTER IV

A Tender Conscience: 1503–1529

PAGE

Henry VIII — His Marriage with Catherine of Aragon — The Dispensation — A Conscience Undisturbed — A Conscience Awakened—Views on the Nullity of the Marriage—First Steps for "Divorce"—Their Failure—The New Method . 35

CHAPTER V

The King's Instruments

Cranmer at Cambridge—The Discovery of Cranmer—The Bearing of his Theory of the Divorce—The King and the Scholar—The Training of a Primate—Thomas Cromwell—His Character—Italy: the "Prince"—Cromwell the Adventurer—Cromwell and Wolsey—Cromwell and Henry 42

CHAPTER VI

The Supreme Head: 1529–1534

Aspects of Henry's Reformation—It was not Doctrinal—Papal Supremacy—The Divorce and the Universities—Cranmer made Archbishop—Act in Restraint of Appeals—Cranmer pronounces the Divorce—Papal Condemnation thereof—Annates Act—Reformation Parliament—First Acts against Abuses—Heresy-Hunting—The Clergy under Præmunire—The "Supremacy" Clause—The Supplication against the Ordinaries—The Bill of Wards—Answers of Convocation—"Submission of the Clergy"—Resignation of Thomas More—Benefit of Clergy—Effects of the Legislation—Its Character . 52

CHAPTER VII

The Hand of Cromwell: 1534–1540

Legislation of 1534—Act of Succession—More and Fisher refuse the Oath—Further Legislation, 1534-5—Execution of More and Fisher—Cranmer and the King's Victims—Cromwell Vicar-General—The Monastic System—Corruption of the Monasteries—Previous Evidence—The Evidence before Parliament—The First Visitation and Suppression—The Pilgrimage of Grace—Completion of the Suppression—Tuning the Pulpits—Fall of Cromwell 66

CHAPTER VIII

Fidei Defensor: 1529–1547

PAGE

Cranmer and Royal Supremacy—Freedom of Conscience—Henry's Views on Authority—Restraint of Superstitious Practices—Translation of Scripture—Suppression of Heresy—Tyndale's Bible—Coverdale, Matthew, and the Great Bible—Proposed Revision—The English Litany—The Ten Articles—The Bishops' Book—The German Protestants—The Six Articles—Celibacy—The King's Book—Discussions on the Sacraments and on Orders—The *Rationale*—Death and Character of Henry 80

CHAPTER IX

Affairs on the Continent: 1530–1563

The German *Modus Vivendi*—Henry VIII. holds aloof—The Political Riddle—Growth and Fall of the Schmalkaldic League—Demand for a General Council—Difficulty of summoning one—The Diet of Ratisbon—Council summoned at Trent—Ignatius Loyola—The Jesuit System—Calvin and Calvinism—The Position in 1547—Maurice of Saxony—From the Peace of Augsburg to 1563 97

CHAPTER X

Josiah: 1547–1549

The New Government—Gardiner in Opposition—Theories of the Eucharist—Justification—Purgatory—Celibacy—Images—The Plan of Campaign—The Homilies—The *Paraphrase*—The Visitation—Imprisonment of Gardiner and Bonner—Legislation of Edward's First Year—War against Images—Suppression of Preaching—New Order of Communion—The First Prayer-Book 111

CHAPTER XI

The Puritan Eddy: 1549–1553

Weakness of Edward's Government—Reform and Plunder—The Western Rising—Ket's Rising—Fall of Somerset—Swiss Influences—Ridley—Alasco—Hooper and Knox—Cranmer and the Eucharist—Aggressive Reformers—Nonconformity—"Reformatio Legum"—Second Act of Uniformity—Second Prayer-Book—The Ordinal—The Forty-Two Articles—Character of the Government—Cranmer's Reformation . . 127

CHAPTER XII

Reaction and Counter-Reaction: 1553–1559

PAGE

Northumberland's Plot—Moderation of Mary—Imprisonment of Bishops—Repeal of Ecclesiastical Laws—Wyatt's Rebellion: its Consequences—The Married Clergy—Character of Parliament—Marriage of Philip and Mary—Gardiner—Reconciliation with Rome—Character of Mary—First Year of Persecution—Who were the Persecutors?—Bonner and Gardiner—Unique Character of the Persecution—Resulting Reaction . 143

CHAPTER XIII

The Least of the Martyrs: 1529–1556

The Martyrs' Reward—The Reproach of Cranmer—Under Henry VIII.—Cranmer and the Supremacy—His Work under Edward—His Lack of Self-Reliance—His Occasional Courage—Cranmer under Attainder—The Three Bishops at Oxford—Cranmer's Trial and Condemnation—He asks to "confer"—Submission, Degradation, and Appeal—Third and Fourth Submissions—The Recantation—The Second Recantation—The Virtue of Courage—Last Days—St Mary's Church—The Witness 157

CHAPTER XIV

Epilogue: The Reformation in England

Results—Two Aspects of the Reformation—Sovereignty of the Temporal Power—Becket and Cranmer—Cranmer and Comprehension—The Clergy and the Reformation—Comprehension and Ambiguity—Elizabeth—Rival Theories—Church and Nation Commensurate—Church Endowments—Church a Divine Institution—The Laity and the Reformation: First Stages; Under Edward; Under Mary—English Protestantism 175

Index 191

LIST OF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

I. Contemporary Sovereigns, 1501–1560.

II. Notable Dates bearing on the Reformation, before 1529.

III. Henry viii.'s Reformation, 1529–1547.

IV. Cranmer's Reformation, 1547–1553.

V. The Reactions, 1553–1559.

I. Contemporary Sovereigns, 1501–1560.

Date.	England.	Rome.	Empire.	Spain.	France.
1501	Henry VII.	Alexander VI.	Maximilian I.	Ferdinand.	Louis XII.
1503	...	Pius III.			
1503	...	Julius II.			
1509	Henry VIII.				
1513	...	Leo X.			
1515	. .	...	...	...	Francis I.
1516	...	...	...	Charles V.	
1519	...	...	Charles V.		
1522	...	Adrian VI.			
1523	...	Clement VII.			
1534	...	Paul III.			
1547	Edward VI. (January).	...	...	...	Henry II.
1550	...	Julius III.			
1553	Mary (July).				
1555	...	Marcellus II.			
1555	...	Paul IV.			
1556	...	...	Ferdinand I.	Philip II.	
1558	Elizabeth (November).				
1559	...	Pius IV.	...	...	Francis II.
1560	...	...	...	...	Charles IX.

1384 Death of Wiclif.
1415 Huss burned.
1440 *Gutenberg's Printing Press (circa).*
1453 *Fall of Constantinople.*
1466 Birth of Erasmus and Colet.
1478 Birth of More.
1483 Birth of Luther.
1484 Birth of Zwingli.
1489 Birth of Cranmer.
1490 *Savonarola in Florence.*
1491 Birth of Henry VIII. and Ignatius Loyola.
1492 Alexander VI. Pope. Death of Lorenzo de Medici.
More and Colet at Oxford.
Discovery of America.
1494 Birth of Francis I.
1496 Colet begins to lecture at Oxford.
1497 Birth of Melanchthon.
1498 *Erasmus meets More and Colet.*
1500 Birth of Charles V.
1501 Marriage of Prince Arthur and Catherine.
1502 Death of Prince Arthur.
1503 Julius II. Pope.
Dispensation for Marriage of Henry and Catherine.
Cranmer goes to Cambridge.
1505 Colet Dean of St. Paul's. Birth of Knox.
1509 *Accession of Henry VIII.* Birth of Calvin.
1511 Erasmus at Cambridge. "The Praise of Folly."
1513 *Leo X. Pope.*
1515 Accession of Francis I. Marignano.
1516 More's "Utopia."
Erasmus' "Greek Testament." Birth of Mary.
Charles V. King of Spain.
1517 *Luther and Indulgences.*
1519 Zwingli at Zurich. *Charles V. Emperor.*
Death of Colet.
1520 Field of Cloth of Gold.
Luther burns the Pope's Bull.
1521 *Diet and Edict of Worms.*
Death of Leo X. (December).
1522 Adrian VI. Pope. Disappointment of Wolsey.
1523 *Clement VII. Pope.* Second Disappointment of Wolsey.
1524 German Peasants' Revolt.
1525 Battle of Pavia. Change of English Policy.
1526 Diet of Spires. Tyndale's New Testament.
1527 Sack of Rome.
Henry begins Divorce Negotiations.
1529 Failure of Divorce Proceedings in England. The Case revoked to Rome. Fall of Wolsey.
Protest of Spires.
Reformation Parliament meets.

Year.	Europe.	England.	
		General.	Parliamentary.
1529	*Protest of Spires.*	Fall of Wolsey. More Chancellor. Cranmer in favour.	Meeting of Reformation Parliament.
1530	Augsburg Diet and Confession.	Clergy threatened with Præmunire. *Rise of Cromwell.*	Probate, Mortuaries, and Pluralities [Acts.
	League of Schmalkald (Dec.).	Cranmer in Italy. Wolsey dies (Nov.).	
1531	Death of Zwingli.	Convocation grants a Subsidy, and accepts the qualified Supremacy Clause.	
		Cranmer marries, in Germany.	
1532	Treaty of Nuremberg, between Charles and Protestants.	*"Submission of the Clergy."*	Supplication against the Ordinaries.
		More resigns. Warham dies.	Annates Act (α, Provisional).
		Secret Marriage of Henry and Anne Boleyn.	Benefit of Clergy Act (α).
1533		*Cranmer Archbishop* (March). The Oaths.	*Act in Restraint of Appeals.*
		Cranmer pronounces "Divorce."	
	Pope pronounces Divorce null.	King and Cranmer appeal to General Council.	
		Elizabeth born.	
1534			Act of Submission of Clergy and in Restraint of Appeals.
		Repudiation of Papal Jurisdiction by Convocations and Universities.	*Annates Act* (β), with *congé d'élire.*
			Peter Pence Act.
	Pope condemns the Divorce.		Succession Act (α).
	Paul III. succeeds Clement VII.	More and Fisher imprisoned.	
	Loyola at Montmartre.		*Act of Supremacy.*
			Treasons Act.

			Act of Succession (β).
1535	Contarini and Pole Cardinals.		Annates Act (γ) transferring to Crown.
	Fisher chosen for Cardinal.	Execution of More and Fisher.	
	English Negotiations with Protestants.	Coverdale's Bible.	
		Cromwell Vicar-General.	
	Anabaptists at Münster.	Visitation of Monasteries begins.	
1536			Benefit of Clergy Act (β).
			Act for Commission on Ecclesiastical Laws.
		English Bible to be set up in Churches.	Act *Dissolving Lesser Monasteries.*
	Death of Erasmus.	Execution of Anne Boleyn.	End of Reformation Parliament.
		Marriage with Jane Seymour.	
	Calvin's Institutes.	*The Ten Articles.*	
		Pilgrimage of Grace.	
1537		New Visitation of Monasteries.	
		The Bishops' Book.	
		Birth of Edward.	
		Matthew's Bible.	
1538	Calvin banished from Geneva.		
	Lutheran Deputation to England.		
1539		*The Great Bible.*	*Dissolution of all Monasteries.*
			Six Articles Act.
1540	Paul III. recognises the Order of Jesuits.	Marriage with Anne of Cleves.	Royal Proclamations given force of [Law.
		Attainder and Execution of Cromwell.	
1541	*Calvin returns to Geneva.*		
	Diet of Ratisbon.		
1542	Council of Trent convoked.		
	Inquisition at Rome.		
1543	*Order of Jesuits confirmed.*	*The King's Book.*	
		Convocation appoints a Commission to prepare a new Service-Book.	
1544	Charles V. and Francis at peace.	*Litany in English* authorised.	
1545	*Council of Trent opened* (Dec.).		
1546	Death of Luther (February).		Chantries given to the King.
	Schmalkaldic War.		
1547	Death of Francis I. (March).	Death of Henry (28th January).	

Year.	Europe.	England.	
		General.	Parliamentary.
1547	Accession of Henry II. (France).	Somerset Protector.	
	Council of Trent transferred to Bologna.	Proclamation against Images.	
		Homilies; "Paraphrase" of Erasmus.	
	Battle of Mühlberg.	*Gardiner and Bonner imprisoned.*	Act for Receiving in both kinds.
		Convocation asks for Veto, or Representation, and Commission on Ecclesiastical Laws.	Repeal of Treasons and Six Articles Acts.
			Chantries given to the King.
1548	*Interim of Augsburg.*	Windsor Commission appointed.	
	Suspension of Council.	New Order of Communion.	
1549			*First Prayer-Book.*
		Peter Martyr at Oxford.	*Act of Uniformity* (21st January).
		Western Rising.	Act legalising Marriage of Priests.
		Ket's Rising.	
	Death of Paul III.	Fall of Somerset.	Act against Images.
1550	Julius III. Pope.		Commission for Ecclesiastical Laws reappointed.
		Bucer at Cambridge.	*New Ordinal authorised.*
		New Ordinal issued.	
		Hooper refuses a Bishopric. *Non-conformity.*	
1551	Council renewed at Trent.	Hooper accepts.	
		Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum.	
1552	Maurice of Saxony.	Execution of Somerset.	*Second Act of Uniformity, and Prayer-Book.*
	Treaty of Passau.		
1553		*Forty-Two Articles.*	
		Death of Edward (6th July). *Mary.*	

Year.	Europe.	England.	
		General.	Parliamentary.
1553	Death of Maurice of Saxony.	Failure of Northumberland's Plot. Gardiner Lord Chancellor. Bonner restored. Cranmer and others imprisoned.	*Repeal of Edward's Ecclesiastical Laws.*
1554		Wyatt's Rebellion. Lady Jane executed. Married Clergy deprived. Three Bishops removed to Oxford. *Spanish Marriage* (July). *Pole received as Legate.*	Submission of Parliament to Rome. *Revival of Heresy Acts.*
1555	*Peace of Augsburg.* *Paul* IV. *Pope.*	*Rogers Proto-Martyr* (4th February). Hooper, Ferrar, and some seventy others burned this year. Cranmer summoned "to Rome" (Sept.). *Trial of Cranmer at Oxford.* Ridley and Latimer burned (Oct.). Gardiner dies (November).	Repeal of Statutes against Rome since [1529. Tenths and First-Fruits restored.
1556	*Charles* V. *abdicates.* Philip II. King of Spain.	Cranmer's First Submission (Jan.). ,, Second, Third, and Fourth Submissions (February). ,, Appeal to General Council (February). ,, Two Recantations (March). ,, *Martyrdom* (21st March). Pole becomes Archbishop.	
1557		Persecution continues till .	
1558	Ferdinand I. Emperor. Death of Charles V.	Death of Mary and of Pole (Nov.). *Accession of Elizabeth.*	
1559	Pius IV. Pope.	Parker Archbishop.	Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity.

CRANMER

CHAPTER I

Prologue: Unrest

The Reformation in England, treated as a separate phenomenon, begins with what may be called the movement for a constitutional reform: reform free from any schismatic character. In a sense, Wiclif was the father of the Reformation; but he and his disciples were in revolt against the powers that be, and they hardly brought reform nearer. They were but pioneers. Lollardry as a religious movement obtained no general hold, its social and economic aspects being more prominent. Reformation of the Church, a new moral and religious standard, entered the sphere of practical politics when it came to be demanded by her own most loyal sons without arousing the opposition of the State. And therefore it is with the "Oxford Reformers" that the era may be said to commence: in the closing decade of the fifteenth century.

Not in England only, but throughout Christendom, the time for purgation had arrived. The conscience

of the Western World imperatively needed arousing. State-craft during the last hundred years had degenerated into a science of pure expediency which recognised no moral law. Our own Henry v. was the mirror of chivalry; the absolute sincerity of his religious conviction has never been questioned; but he plunged into a war which for sheer inexcusable aggression is unsurpassed. The English were driven out of France by one who is perhaps the most perfectly heroic figure in history; men whose standard of nobility was certainly no whit below the average of their time burned her for a witch and a heretic. Europe permitted the Turk to vaunt the triumph of the Crescent over the Cross. Louis xi. indulged himself in ecstasies of fetish-worship in the intervals of concocting treacheries. In Italy the arts of lying and poisoning were achieving their finest consummation. Everywhere learning had sunk to its lowest ebb. The genuine subtleties of the earlier scholasticism had given place to a mere barren logomachy. Among the clergy, advancement was the reward, not of holiness, learning, eloquence, administrative ability, but of connection by blood or by service with powerful families.

But light was to illumine the intellectual darkness. Before 1450 the printing press had taken form; and now the shame of Christendom was to become its salvation. Constantinople fell in 1453; the fugitives brought with them the forgotten literature of the ancient world. The feast suddenly set before them proved, perhaps, something too intoxicating to the finer intelligences; the prevailing materialism, intellectualised, was hardly rendered more edifying though

it was less gross. But the New Learning soon passed to those who were prepared to make a nobler use of it; who could grasp its spiritual significance as well as its pagan fascination; and with the opportunity to know came an increased desire of knowing. The New Culture, moralised, formed the Conservative element of the Reformation: while, by giving the Peoples an open Bible, it provided a revolutionary and Puritan basis. Thus the extreme Reformers took their stand on the letter of Scripture, the Conservatives took theirs on its reasonable interpretation.

The first effect, however, of the New Learning did not tend to reformation at all, but to a sceptical conformity on the part of the cultured, an increasingly shameless abuse of their office by the clergy, and a popular depth of superstition, not, it may be, really greater than before, but more remarkable by contrast with intellectual licence. The consummation was reached when almost the vilest member of quite the vilest family whose names disgrace the annals of Europe was elected as the Vicar of Christ on earth in the person of the Borgia, Pope Alexander VI., in 1492.

Almost simultaneously with this utmost degradation of the highest office in Christendom there arose in Florence, trumpet-tongued, comminatory, prophetic, the forerunner of reform, Girolamo Savonarola. The tangible effects in Italy were shortlived enough; but the spark of moral enthusiasm was kindled, and the intelligent perception of fraud had already been aroused. Between the two, the corruptions which had overgrown the Church were doomed, in part at least, to be swept away.

In Italy, no doubt, that corruption had assumed its

most portentous proportions; in England, probably, it was less marked than anywhere on the Continent. The English people have a genius for preserving the decencies; and the relative prevalence of free institutions, coupled with an unfailing resistance to all attempts at establishing an ecclesiastical within the secular *imperium*, had enforced sobriety. Standing altogether outside the pale of the Empire, England was endowed with a national unity unknown in more southern lands; and was enabled to preserve a certain orderliness, even through the turmoil of thirty years of civil war, which the European States could not parallel. Most important of all, her insular position had imparted or secured a national character to the Church within her borders, so that the clergy and the ecclesiastical organisation generally stood in an exceptionally close relation to the State, and in an exceptionally independent relation to the Holy See.

It is singularly difficult to arrive with even approximate certainty at a clear idea of the condition of the Church in England before and during the first fifty years of the sixteenth century. Some of the anti-ecclesiastical literature of the times appears more akin to the rhetoric of the Hyde Park agitator of to-day than to anything else. Putrescence would be a mild term for the state of things therein described.

About the year 1527 one Simon Fish wrote a book entitled *A Supplicacyon for the Beggers*, being professedly a suggestion that the money appropriated to the support of the clergy would be more profitably bestowed upon the poor, the maimed, and the halt, who were dependent on charity for their livelihood. It is, in fact, an all-round indictment of the clergy.

"There is yn the tymes of youre noble predecessours passed craftily crept into this your realme an other sort (not of impotent but) of strong puissaunt and counterfeit holy and ydell beggers and vacabundes. . . . These are (not the herdes, but the rauinous wolves going in herdes clothing devouring the flocke) the Bisshoppes, Abbottes, Priours, Deacons, Archdeacons, Suffraganes, Prestes, Monkes, Chanons, Freres, Pardoners, and Somners." This "rauinous, cruell, and insatiabill generacion" are proved by a curious arithmetical process to have absorbed half the landed estate of the country, and to fatten upon alms at the rate of nearly £50,000 per annum, although numbering but one in four hundred of the population. "And whate do al these gredy sort of sturdy idell holy theues? . . . Nothing but that all your subiectes shulde fall into disobedience, and rebellion against your grace and be under theim. . . . These be they that corrupt the hole generation of mankind yn your realme." The charge of unbridled sexual immorality is hurled at the "bloudsuppers" with a sweeping universality and a copiousness of language which would reduce to envious despair the most uncompromising enemy of a bloated aristocracy. "Where is your swerde, power, crowne, and dignitie, become that shuld punische the felonies, rapes, murdres, and treasons committed by this sinfull generacion?" It is a trifle comic to find this flagellator of ecclesiastical vices going back to include in his curse Stephen Langton, the stout opponent of King John's tyranny; that monarch being represented as a holy and righteous ruler! It appears, however, on perusal that the moving cause of this pamphlet was the punishment for heresy of one Richard Hunne,

who had "commenced accyon of premunire ageinst a prest."

It is impossible to take such an indictment as this seriously. The language used would almost be extravagant if applied to the Tartar hordes who followed the conquering banner of Tamerlane. Written when the great Dean Colet was hardly cold in his grave, when Warham was Archbishop of Canterbury, and Fisher Bishop of Rochester, the frantic excesses of Simon Fish stand condemned on their very face. And yet, in the modern introduction to the reprint from which the foregoing quotations are taken, the work is described as a "terse and brave little book." It is, indeed, conceivable that it was produced by a sincere fanaticism, but if so it was fanaticism run mad. The one thing to be said is that even the rankest fanaticism and the fiercest hatred could never have evolved such a parody of serious invective unless there had been colourable grounds for holding the mass of the clergy guilty of greed, worldliness, and lax morality.

We shall have to deal more specifically in a subsequent chapter with the charges against the monasteries, which were made the justification of the great spoliation. It is no longer possible to feel any reasonable doubt that these were gravely, not to say grossly, exaggerated; but it is equally impossible to accept as convincing the defence of their ingenious advocates.

It is unnecessary to fall back on the evidence of men like Simon Fish, or on the traditions of scandal readily accepted by Protestant controversialists in days when monks, Jesuits, and the Inquisition were inextricably mixed up in the popular mind with the misdeeds, real and hypothetical, of the Spaniards. Nor

is it necessary to lay any great stress on the reports of commissioners appointed by a Government which was deliberately concocting a case. Certain facts are palpable. The clergy of England acknowledged the primacy of the pope, at whose hands the Archbishop of Canterbury received the *pallium*, and England was not free from the corruption of the papal dominion.

At Rome the higher ecclesiastical powers were debased enough to place the Borgia on the papal throne. Continental bishops and archbishops practically performed the functions of secular princes as well as those of Fathers of the Church. They had large revenues under their control. Their temptations were particularly strong. Instead of standing forth and denouncing the prevalent moral corruption, they went with it, and the minor clergy followed the example set them in high places. Probably they were no more prone to iniquity than their lay neighbours, but their opportunities were greater, and they did not neglect them.

The same principles applied in England. A system capable of working nobly while the clergy were inspired by moral enthusiasm became ruinous when enthusiasm died down. If bishops and abbots neglected their pastoral responsibilities, it was only natural that the sense of responsibility should dwindle away in the parish priest and the monk. If the authorities were lax in enforcing discipline, the rank and file were not likely to be over-zealous. Without assuming anything that can fairly be called universal corruption, it is obvious that a very prevalent laxity was an inevitable result of the conditions.

But beyond the slackness produced by immunity from discipline, the temptation to positive abuse of the

sacred office was strong. According to the theory of the Catholic Church, repentance and confession were the conditions precedent of pardon and absolution for sin; and it lay with the priest to judge on what terms the absolution should be pronounced. Also, the prayers of the Church would avail to mitigate the penalties of purgatory. It was a very easy step from the latter doctrine to teach that the prayers of the Church might be bought; and from the former, first, to the idea that it was in the power of the priest to absolve or to refuse absolution at will, and second, to the corollary that absolution might in practice be bought. The conclusion was obvious. By conciliating the clergy, absolution might be obtained and the term of purgatory be shortened. The powers of a priesthood regarded as the sole legitimate channel for grace were simply irresistible. Whatever the orthodox doctrine might be, the theory vulgarly taught and held offered an enormous inducement to the clergy, in plain terms, to treat the Grace of God as a commodity which they could sell at their own price. And there is no sort of question that, with more or less honesty of intent, great numbers of the clergy did yield to the inducement and teach that sin might be condoned and its penalties escaped by adequate cash payment. That the pure doctrine of the Catholic Church countenanced no such theory or practice is nothing to the point. The essence of the charge against the unreformed Church is that its effectual teachings and actual practices were distortions and abuses of the pure doctrine.

The same point applies to the case of the Monasteries. The whole Monastic system in any possible

form is open to attack and is capable of defence, as is the doctrine that the priest is a needful intermediary between man and God. But the effective demand for a reformation was created not by the Monastic system, but by the abuse of it. It is vain to point to the rules of the religious houses, and say "these men cannot have been idle, vicious, and luxurious." The gravamen of the accusation against them was that their rules were set at naught in practice. Primarily in both cases, the principle was not challenged; but when the abuse found defenders in high places, the claim of the principle was called in question. So at a later day the American colonies submitted to taxation for commercial purposes; but when taxation was applied for revenue purposes, the newly claimed right was challenged, and when it was defended the whole right of taxation was attacked.

Directly or indirectly the clergy were in the habit of making a highly profitable use of absolution and masses for the dead. Nor did they hesitate in like manner to encourage the worship of relics and of images in a directly fraudulent manner for purposes of gain; attributing special virtues, for instance, to "Our Lady" of this or that shrine—a proceeding utterly irreconcilable with the doctrine that the image was to be regarded merely as a symbol, and not as a thing in itself worshipful; and displaying relics which they knew to be sheer deceptions. Again, the charge has nothing to do primarily with the theory that true relics demand reverence, even that they may be miraculously endowed; or with the contention that images are to be commended as aids to worship.

This, then, was the state of things for which a

drastic remedy was required in England. The higher clergy were for the most part engaged in political or at any rate worldly interests rather than on those of religion, high offices of State being much in their hands. Their neglect of their responsibilities led necessarily to a similar neglect on the part of their lesser brethren. An almost universal laxity of discipline carried in its train a very general disposition to extreme self-indulgence and idleness, frequently accompanied by actually vicious living. The doctrines of the Church were habitually distorted and abused, not without practical sanction from the highest quarters, in order to acquire money. The lay folk were demoralised by the encouragement of the belief that a long purse was an efficacious passport through purgatory; while symbols were effectively transformed into idols, and reverence for the saints was perverted into local fetish-worship. Learning had fallen into general neglect, and the theology of the schools had sunk to a pseudo-metaphysical and meaningless jargon.

These characteristics, however, were not peculiar to the Church in England; she showed them in varying degrees in every country of Christendom. But there were distinguishing features about the ecclesiastical organisation in this country, which materially influenced the course of the Reformation here.

The clergy in England had never from the earliest days admitted the unqualified supremacy of the pope. If he invaded their constitutional independence, they were ready to appeal to the Crown; as, when the Crown threatened them, they were prepared to appeal to Rome. Aggression on the part of one of those rival authorities was tolerably certain to drive them

for the time being into the arms of the other; but the main position was never surrendered, that whatever authority either pope or king preserved over them was distinctly limited. The State, on the other hand, had habitually, and with varying success, challenged the papal authority, claiming for itself large powers of control, even to the right of confiscating Church property. The Conqueror himself had forbidden the admission of papal legates; Henry II. had done battle with Becket for the jurisdiction of the King's Courts in disputes between clerics and laymen. The Statutes of Mortmain had checked or attempted to check bestowal of lands on the Church; the Statutes of Provisors had challenged papal claims to patronage; the Statutes of Præmunire had forbidden appeals to Rome; the first Edward laid a tax of one-half upon the clergy for his wars; under the house of Lancaster large proposals for sheer confiscation had been mooted as perfectly legitimate.

If the first real movement for reform was to emanate from men of character and learning, the first legislative action was to be initiated by a monarch who found himself inconvenienced by papal claims, and for whom the emancipation from papal authority and the filling of his own coffers were the first consideration. He was to find his instruments in an archbishop—selected, no doubt, for that very purpose—who was ready to go to unprecedented lengths in the recognition of royal supremacy, and in a minister bent on consolidating the absolute control of the Crown over every department of State.

CHAPTER II

Prologue: The Scholars' Movement, 1496–1529

The spark of moral enthusiasm kindled at Florence by Savonarola was caught in England by John Colet.

Born in 1466, the same year probably as his cosmopolitan associate Erasmus, and twelve years before Thomas More, the son of a wealthy and successful London merchant who held the office of Lord Mayor, Colet went to Oxford; where, being still a young man, he was inspired with a thirst for the New Learning which Grocyn and Linacre were beginning to introduce from Italy; a thirst associated in his case with a religious turn of thought which made him deliberately elect to take orders in preference to pursuing the brilliant prospects undoubtedly opened by a secular career to a man of his capacity, backed up by his father's wealth and established position.

About 1494 he visited Italy, the home of scholars; leaving behind him at Oxford young More, who, according to the not unusual practice, had gone up to the university at the age of fourteen, and whose brilliant gifts and fascinating character had probably enabled him already to form an intimacy which was to be lifelong with his senior.

Whether in the course of his travels Colet fell under

the direct personal influence of Savonarola is uncertain; but it is hardly likely that he would have omitted some sojourn in Florence when the great preacher was at the height of his fame. At any rate he returned to Oxford in 1496, his mind greatly enriched by his experiences; and forthwith commenced to deliver a series of lectures on the Pauline Epistles which contributed a new departure in university teaching.

The fundamental change was the application of a new method; the method of critical exposition taking the place of scholastic dissection: of studying a discourse or treatise instead of dealing in a collection of texts and phrases. The old way of commenting as it were on a miscellaneous congeries of sentences—each of which had to be elucidated, interpreted, complicated, reinterpreted, illustrated by other sentences relevant or irrelevant, allegorised, referred to authority, referred to each other, and so prepared for interpretation all over again in infinite series—gave place to an intelligent search for the meaning of the writer. Out of this again emerged the perception that the Pauline Epistles were exceedingly practical treatises on life and conduct rather than a collection of puzzles for the exercise of erudite ingenuity. And the lecturer's enthusiasm for the vividly human personality of the great apostle communicated itself to his hearers; sowing the seeds of revolt not against the Church but against scholasticism.

The movement thus initiated was not in its nature at all inimical to orthodoxy; there was no suggestion of heresy about it. It involved simply an appeal to the learned to study the sacred texts in the tongue in

which they were written, instead of treating them as extracts from Duns and Aquinas. It was a challenge to the doctors of the schools, not an attack on the dogmas of the Church.

The teacher was eloquent, vigorous, learned, original, and very much in earnest. His lectures gathered round him all the intelligence of the university, and made no little stir. Colet did not confine his attentions exclusively to St. Paul, but was ready to apply his critical principles to the whole of the Scriptures, Old and New Testament alike, dwelling constantly on the importance of going to the fountainhead, and reading the originals, instead of treating the Vulgate as a verbally inspired version, as was the common habit. Even ordinarily cultivated persons were still very much disposed to regard Greek as a dangerous heathen tongue, the study of which might lead the student woefully astray: and Thomas More seems to have been hurried away from the university by his father, in order to take to work seriously as a law student, partly because the language of Plato was suspected of being too alluring.

The scholastic prejudices were too long established and too deeply rooted to be immediately removed; the local *vis inertiæ* offered a stolid resistance; but the movement appealed strongly to everything that was best in Oxford. The peculiar characteristic of the New Learning in England was, that practically from the very beginning it was turned into the channel of biblical research and religious inquiry by men who were Christians first and scholars afterwards; instead of, as happened in Italy, the pursuit of pagan ideals by men who were scholars first and Christians after-

wards, if, indeed, they were Christians at all in anything but outward profession.

A few years later, about 1504 or 1505, Colet was made Dean of St. Paul's, and transferred his activities to London, where he rapidly achieved the highest reputation as a preacher; whose conversation in private life maintained the same high level as his pulpit utterances, while his personal character was convincingly admirable.

It was while he was still at Oxford that Colet and Erasmus became acquainted; possibly they had met before in Paris. In 1498 Erasmus, visiting England, was attracted to the university on the Isis, and formed a deep and lasting friendship with Colet, and also with More. More was to play his part in the movement as a politician, a statesman, a man of letters, moving in the world of affairs; Colet played his as a preacher and teacher in Oxford and London; not only scholars, but kings, princes, and prelates in every European State were to listen to the voice of Erasmus, though as yet he had not achieved his later position.

At this time, in fact, Erasmus was Colet's pupil. His latinity was superior, but in Greek he was still a long way behind; and Greek was very much more important than Latin. The direction and the inspiration which Erasmus derived from Colet were to issue later in a work of vast importance; of more immediate consequence, not to England only, but to all Europe, than anything written by Colet himself; yet, but for Colet it is likely enough that it would never have been written at all.

Eighteen years, however, were to elapse before Erasmus published his edition of the Greek Testament.

When he left Oxford, after a brief sojourn, it was much against the will of Colet, who would have persuaded him even then to devote himself to exegesis; but Erasmus was wiser, knowing that he had yet very much to learn before he could speak with that confidence in himself which was needful to convince others.

In the interval, Colet was transferred to the deanery. More, still a "beardless boy," so distinguished himself in Parliament by his successful opposition to one of Henry VII.'s demands for subsidies, that he had to retire for a while into private life; and when Erasmus returned to England for another brief visit in 1505, he found his two friends established in London, and in constant intimate intercourse.

In 1509 Henry VII. died, and Henry VIII. at the age of eighteen succeeded him; being at that time a youth of the most brilliant promise. To a magnificent physique were joined in him a brain of unusual acuteness, a geniality of manner, and a wealth of intellectual culture, which gave hopes of a right royal disposition; hopes to be marred by the gradual development of a cold-blooded selfishness and a fiery temper which had not as yet betrayed themselves. The dead king had been an exceptionally astute, strong, and capable monarch; but his sordid avarice, whatever political advantages it may have conferred, had made him intensely unpopular. The accession of the young prince, endowed with every attractive quality, was hailed on all hands with an outburst of enthusiasm. The Saturnian rule was to be renewed; a golden age was to return. The instruments of his father's tyranny were cast down; learning, the arts, civil justice, were to flourish in the

land. The friends of Erasmus urged him to make haste to return and rejoice in the sunlight.

Erasmus came; and the sun continued to shine. The high spirits of himself and his friends were reflected in the "*Encomium Moriæ*," or "Praise of Folly," which he wrote and published soon after his arrival—a light-hearted satire on the follies, chiefly scholastic and ecclesiastical, of the day, which, in a humorous vein, strikes the keynote of reform as it was understood by scholars and men of wit; necessarily avoiding in expression the high seriousness which lay behind. The gift of combining that high seriousness with a subtle and ever-present humour, the jest which covers an earnest meaning, the earnest which is conveyed in a jesting form, was Thomas More's; and shortly afterwards, in 1516, it took form in the *Utopia*.

With greater clearness, because more seriously than the *Praise of Folly*, the *Utopia* conveys the attitude of the Reformers before Luther had identified reform with war against the papacy. In depicting his imaginary State in an otherwise unknown quarter of that New World which Columbus had just revealed to Europe, More was obviously not designing a society such as might in his view have been reconstructed out of a European country; any more than Plato would have supposed it possible to reconstruct Athens on the system of his Republic; but some fairly conclusive inferences can be drawn both as to the prevailing social conditions and the kind of improvements which seemed desirable. More himself would hardly have proposed to introduce his idealised conditions by legalisation.

He starts from a position which no political theorist will question; which nevertheless was in singular contrast to the practice of the time. This is the Platonic doctrine that it is the function of the governor to rule for the benefit of the governed. If Thrasymachus could only have studied the Prince of Macchiavelli, he would have felt even more thoroughly convinced that there was something hopelessly wrong with the Socratic argument; that it was in fact irredeemably opposed to human nature. But the *Utopia* no less obviously assumes that the doctrine is a complete invasion of all recognised practice. Its author was quite evidently of opinion that so long as princes were in the habit of hankering for extended dominions, so long their actual dominions were doomed to misgovernment. From the portions of his book which deal with sumptuary and economic conditions, it is easy to infer an England in which a vast army of drones "polled and shaved" the workers; wealthy men with swarms of idle retainers; vagabonds who would not dig and were not at all ashamed to beg; and in this host of the unproductive, he expressly includes the "so great and so idle company of priests and religious men as they call them."

This last item is made peculiarly significant by the extreme restriction of the number of priests in Utopia —thirteen of them only in every city, who are "of exceeding holiness, being so few." Quite evidently, there is in More's mind no disparagement of the priestly office, but the contrary; yet a very strong conviction that the multiplication of the "religious" is in every way demoralising. At the same time there is none of that extravagant condemnation suggested,

in which the later enthusiasts for Reformation were wont to indulge.

The whole section of the *Utopia* which touches on religion strikes the note which one would expect—of toleration for all opinions provided that they are expressed with decency and not actually immoral in tendency. More held with Erasmus and Colet that the intricacies of doctrine are not essential, provided that the cardinal facts are realised; for the Utopians condemn those who deny the Deity and the future life. At the same time the traveller Raphael Hythlodey is obviously of opinion that they were fully justified in suppressing the zealous Christian, whose "word in season" was too sulphurous for the public peace. That is the real explanation of the apparent contradiction between the Reformer More's theory of tolerance and the Lord Chancellor More's practice of persecution. The Peasants' War had come in the interval; and the heretics on whom he laid stern hands were those whose language was violent and their theories anarchical, at least *prima facie*. A high standard of personal morality; a large toleration for divergences on unessential points; a rejection of grossly materialistic accretions and palpable abuses; a contempt for the uncritical and super-subtle logomachy of the schools; a desire to welcome light, and to spread knowledge, all things being conducted with a due regard to public order and discipline, — these were the common characteristics of the scholar-reformers.

On the critical side, these views found their weightiest expression in the edition of the New Testament which Erasmus published at Basel in 1516. The work was his application of the principle which he had learned

eighteen years before from Colet; of going to the Greek to find out what the evangelists and apostles really wrote. Erasmus issued a Greek text with introductions and with his own new Latin translation beside it. Textual criticism was in its infancy, and he was never by any means a master of Greek scholarship: the text and translation were both a long way from perfection; but the publication broke up the stereotyped tradition which had regarded the Vulgate as verbally inspired, and a great step was taken in developing among the younger generation the practice of studying the Scriptures themselves in preference to the commentaries of the doctors. That practice had been initiated at Oxford by Colet, and was carried to Cambridge by Erasmus himself, who had gone there as Professor of Greek in 1511, under the patronage of Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. There can be little doubt that Cranmer, then at Cambridge, and about twenty-two years of age, fell under the influence of the great scholar; though there is no record of any personal intercourse between them.

How matters stood with the more definitely religious side of the movement may be seen from Colet's career at this time. Sporadic examples of Lollardry, and, on the part of men of the old school, such as Fitzjames, Bishop of London, some alarm at the new-fangled methods of Colet himself and his associates and disciples, combined to interest the king and Convocation in the extirpation of heresy; to which particular end that assembly was summoned at the beginning of 1512. The proceedings, however, show clearly enough that the alarm did not extend to ecclesiastics of any intellectual eminence. Colet himself

was appointed to preach the opening sermon; prosecutions for heresy diminished instead of increasing; and an attempt on the part of Fitzjames to have the dean punished as a heretic was ignominiously snuffed out by an archbishop who was on eminently good terms with Erasmus.

This sermon really amounted to a programme of the Reformation as desired by Colet—a process of curing heresy by common sense and right living, instead of the favourite prescription of cautery. Primarily it was an indictment of the secular and worldly way of life prevalent among the clergy; the pursuit of promotion, of highly-paid benefices, of pluralities; the legal greed of the ecclesiastical courts; the devotion to secular occupations; things for which a remedy could be found if the clergy, from the bishops down, would merely exert themselves in their own persons to adopt something like the standard which they were in any case bound to profess. The moral was quite clear. If the clergy set an example of spiritual living, very little more would be heard of heresy, whereof the exciting cause was usually to be found in a comparison between the way of life of the apostles and that of their successors, greatly to the disparagement of the latter. The dean was plain-spoken and straightforward, and did not shirk applying home-truths to the greatest, from Wolsey down; and therefore what he did *not* say may be put to the credit of his fellow-churchmen. So that it is to be noted that the temptations to which he charges them with yielding are not those of the flesh and the devil, but of the world. If the immoralities so freely attributed more particularly to the regular clergy by the advanced Reformers had

been half so flagrant as has commonly been alleged, it is hardly conceivable that Colet would have abstained from strong expression on the subject.

Here, then, is the note of the Reformation which was actually in steady progress; before Luther lifted up his voice, and Pope Leo by taking up the challenge and resisting the movement converted its development into a partisan struggle of creeds. For the knell of the old stubborn and wilful ignorance was already being tolled. There was indeed little sign that the ecclesiastical magnates intended to withdraw from State affairs when Wolsey was the king's chief counsellor; and for many a year to come the Tunstals and Gardiners were to be active politicians. But already among the men who were Collet's contemporaries or seniors all the most distinguished were men of character and advocates of educational progress, such as Warham and Fisher, and of younger men, Gardiner and Latimer and Tunstal; the universities were following the new lights rather than the old traditions; Wolsey, founding Cardinal College at Oxford with the proceeds of suppressed monastic establishments of ill-repute, filled it with pupils of the advanced teachers; Colet in his own school of St. Paul's in London set the example of converting pedagoguy into education; which system he thoroughly established before his death in 1519.

But the outlook of a Reformation to be effected by sweetness and light was shattered by two Revolts, utterly different in character, motive, and intention; that of Luther in Germany, and that of King Henry in England, whereby the Reformation became a Revolution.

CHAPTER III

Prologue: The Lutheran Revolt, 1517–1530

There is an unlimited and perhaps not wholly unprofitable field of speculation open to theorists as to the different course which history might have taken had there been no Martin Luther to lead the Revolution. Some sort of reformation was absolutely certain to come. It might have been little more than an intellectual emancipation such as the Humanists initiated in Italy; or a process of intelligent moral amendment such as the Oxford Reformers sought in England. When Leo x. ascended the papal throne, it may well have been supposed that Erasmus and those who thought and taught with him were going to direct the character of the movement. But all unwittingly, Erasmus had brought not peace but a sword. For it was he, as men said, who had laid the egg that Luther hatched, and thereof came some of the most devastating wars that Europe has known. For good or for evil, on 10th December 1520, when Luther burned the pope's Bull condemning him, he kindled the torch of Revolution. When the Monk of Wittenberg took up the challenge of the Head of the Christian World, the appeal was no longer made to the wise, the learned, and the great ones of the earth, but to the heart of the

people. The Reformation for Erasmus would have been an affair of adaptations, compromises, recognising that there was much to be said on both sides, much that was better left alone. For Luther, it was a warfare of truth against lies, with no unresolvable half-truths. With Erasmus, it was a question what men should be taught to believe; with Luther, it was what they should be moved to feel. Luther's theology was not the vital part of him; Lutheranism was not the vital product; Rome, Geneva, and Oxford have influenced the structure and interpretation of creeds and formularies not less than Wittenberg: but the passionate ardour for reality in things spiritual, the personal responsibility for upholding truth, the enthusiasm of conscience, which translated the Reformation from an external official revision into an inward regenerating force—these the modern world owes to Martin Luther more than to any other man. When the Anglican Church left Roman doctrine it borrowed more from Calvin or Zwingli than from Luther; the Huguenots of France, the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Puritans of England derived their theology from the same school; but it was Luther who sounded the call to arms, Luther who first grappled with the foe and was not overthrown, Luther who gave revolt the justification of success, Luther who proclaimed the fundamental rule, that he must hold to the truth as he conceived it, though all men should be against him.

But in 1517, when Leo x. found himself in want of funds and proposed to supply himself by the method of selling Indulgences, no one was thinking of revolt. The theory of Indulgences had, indeed, been held up to

derision, but that was a small matter—the temporal potentates had no objection to them, and merely haggled with his Holiness as to the share they were to have out of the collection. It was only when Tetzel was about to appear in Saxony that protest was made by Professor Martin Luther, who nailed up his ninety-three theses against Indulgences on the church door; which proceeding derived unexpected effect from the fact that the Elector of Saxony acted upon it and forbade Tetzel to enter his dominions.

During the three years following, events moved more quickly than the papal court recognised. To Leo, the Wittenberg monk seemed to be merely an unimportant upstart, who might have to be suppressed sooner or later. But Luther himself, having once taken the plunge and openly opposed Rome, found his opposition intensifying. He became alive to the fact that the theology which he had imbibed from St. Augustine could not, in many important particulars, be brought into harmony with Roman teaching; and he further discovered that it was for maintaining precisely these same Augustinian tenets, in the main, that Wiclif and Huss had been condemned. The conclusion was clear. Wiclif and Huss were certainly right; therefore the Church which had condemned them for heresy was certainly wrong, and its authority naught.

When matters reached this point, it seemed time to repress so manifest a heretic; and Luther heard that a Bull was about to be issued against him. But he had very thoroughly made up his mind. He had already appealed to the authority of a General Council; he now answered by an attack on the papal authority,

which was practically an invitation to the secular powers to assert their own independence of papal jurisdiction, and to stop the flow of revenue from their territories into the papal coffers.

The appeal touched no small proportion of the German princes; and the cry of "Germany for the Germans" was a telling one, when unsupported doctrinal theses might have been viewed with sufficient coldness. But two immediate questions arose—How would the Elector Frederic of Saxony take it? and How would the newly made Emperor Charles v. take it?

It was certainly not likely that the Emperor would take the anti-papal line. But the Elector was probably the most universally respected prince in Europe, and it was only due to his own flat refusal of the purple that Charles had been elected Emperor in his stead in 1519. Fortunately for Luther, Frederic was not only an eminently cool-headed and honourable man; he was also a friend of the New Learning, who held Erasmus in high esteem. Erasmus had pelted papal and priestly pretensions with ridicule for many a year, and he was obviously in sympathy with what was at least primarily an attack on papal and priestly pretensions, though conducted after a fashion very different from his own. Frederic consulted him, and his advice was that, at any rate, protection should be extended to Luther.

The Bull condemning Luther arrived, and forthwith Luther burned it publicly (December 10). By that act he threw away the scabbard; the sword he had drawn against Rome could never be sheathed again.

An Imperial Diet was about to assemble at Worms,

and the pope addressed to Charles a letter inviting him to crush the heretic. But the mind of the Diet was divided. There might be few enough of the nobles who cared about the doctrines of Transubstantiation or Justification: but besides a creditable bias in favour of giving a man fair play and an open hearing, there were numbers of them in whom the national spirit had been roused, who were indignant at papal and ecclesiastical encroachments. A safe-conduct was granted to Luther. He came, knowing that he was bearing his life in his hand, for a papal safe-conduct had availed nothing to protect Huss. He came to take his stand finally, to refuse to retract a word, to hurl defiance at the pope under the eyes of Christendom, to declare the fallibility of popes and even councils, to deny the authority of a priesthood to stand between man and his Maker.

But although Luther was, so to speak, the incarnation of the revolt, he was not a pioneer but a leader; not a prophet standing alone, but at once the herald and the captain of battalions. Had there been treachery at Worms, it would assuredly have been followed promptly by armed insurrection; not, it may be, strong enough to have held out for long, but quite sufficiently threatening to give the papal party pause. Popular sentiment and national sentiment were both on his side, in spite of emperor and princes. The defiance did not carry the Diet with him, but it destroyed all prospect of a solid antagonism. His life was so seriously in danger, that, as a measure of protection, the Elector deliberately kidnapped him when he was leaving, and concealed him in a Thuringian castle; but if he had fallen, many a life would have paid for

his. The spirit of resistance was roused; and it is hardly too much to say that if Luther had died in 1521, nine-tenths of his work would have been already accomplished. The word had been spoken for which half Christendom was waiting.

It was perfectly evident at Worms that public sentiment was with Luther. But the young Emperor's political designs placed him on the pope's side; he made a treaty with the papal Nuncio; and an edict against Luther was drawn up, approved by those of the Electors present in Worms without the formality of discussion, and issued. Frederic had already left, perceiving that he could not influence the result.

It is a matter of some little importance to observe how youthful at this date were the princes at the head of the leading nations. Henry of England was in his thirtieth year; Francis of France in his twenty-seventh; Charles, lord, by inheritance, of Spain, of Austria, and of the Netherlands, and head of the Empire by election, was not yet one-and-twenty. Of the three, Francis at least was thirsting for martial achievements, for which his appetite had been whetted by the famous victory of Marignano in 1515. Henry had dreams of recovering the French provinces; while his great minister, Wolsey, aspired to the popedom. Charles and Francis were rivals in Italy, and the papal alliance was of great value to the former.

At this stage then—1521—it was by no means agreeable to the schemes of Charles, of Henry, or of Henry's minister to support any attack on the papacy. The voice of Charles was given against Luther. Henry, who prided himself on his theological capacity, wrote a book against the Reformer's doctrine, in return for

which Leo bestowed on him the complimentary title of "Defender of the Faith." In the meantime, however, the bulk of the people of North Germany took their stand with Luther and the Elector of Saxony; and Erasmus, on behalf of the New Learning, had declared himself, up to a certain point, on the same side. Charles had no inclination to push his support of the pope to the extent of creating a German civil war; and, for the time, the Lutheran problem was in effect left to simmer. Luther himself, hidden away in his Thuringian retreat, was preparing that great weapon of the German Reformation, his translation of the Bible.

The religious question, however, was greatly complicated by social problems. As it had befallen in the past in England, so now in Germany the grievances of the peasantry were mixed up with the reform of the Church. Extreme teachers arose, such as Carlstadt and Münzer, who incited the peasants to rebellion, while they preached anti-papal doctrines. From them derived those extreme reformers who in England were classified as Anabaptists; and from their proceedings, and the appalling bloodshed attending the "Peasants' War," came that reaction which affected so many of the best minds in England, and turned the author of the *Utopia* into a hammer of heretics.

Luther himself, emerging from his compulsory seclusion, gave no support to the peasants. Great and genuine as their grievances were, Luther's theory was entirely antagonistic to the idea of revolt against civil authority; nor was he by any means in favour of encouraging a breach between the governing powers and the movement which he had originated. But it

was a matter of course that his opponents should lay at his door the responsibility for all events growing out of that movement.

The Diet of Worms, in fact, meant the alliance of Charles, Leo, and Henry, though the last was inactive. But before the year was out, Leo died, and Wolsey was much disturbed by finding that Charles did not push his candidature for the papacy. Leo's successor, Adrian, proposed great things in the restoration of discipline; but he met with stolid resistance, and died in 1523 without having accomplished anything. By this time, Francis had lost much ground; Charles was no longer so anxious about the English alliance; and Wolsey's personal ambition, as well as his confidence in the Emperor's good faith, received a rude shock, when the Cardinal Giulio de Medici was elected to the popedom as Clement VII.

Clement had been very much on the Spanish side hitherto; but the progress of Charles's power began to be alarming. To have the ambitions of Francis checked was one thing: to become the Emperor's puppet was another. The danger became the greater when, in 1525, Francis met with the disaster of Pavia, the occasion of the celebrated phrase, "All is lost save honour." The French king fell a prisoner into his rival's hands. Charles, with whom negotiations had for some time been carried on with a view to his marriage with the Princess Mary of England, practically broke with Henry by marrying the Infanta of Portugal instead.

This change of relations had momentous results. Whether Henry was already anxious to replace Catherine of Aragon by Anne Boleyn is not abso-

lutely certain; but it was about this time that he began to develop qualms of conscience as to the validity of his marriage with Catherine, a scrupulosity which had not been aroused while he was on friendly terms with her Imperial nephew. Before he had fairly brought his problem before Clement, Charles had virtually acquired control of the papal policy: since the pope could not be persuaded to gratify Henry, Henry gradually arrived at the point of defying the papal authority; and hence arose the breach with Rome.

At first, however, in 1526, the effect was not to render Henry favourable to the Reformation, since at first no unfriendliness to Clement was involved. In the immediate result Clement turned against Charles; the Emperor was led to come to terms with his Lutheran subjects, and found himself at war with the pope.

The Diet of the Empire was held at Spires in 1526. The great Elector, Frederic of Saxony, had just died. The outcome of the Diet, however, was altogether favourable to the reforming party; the Emperor in effect, through his brother Ferdinand, withdrawing the anti-Lutheran edict of Worms, by assenting to the general proposition that the several States of the empire should act upon it or not as they individually thought fit; or, in the more pious formula of the decree, "as each thought it could answer it to God and the Emperor." The underlying theory was afterwards crystallised in the phrase, "*Cujus regio, ejus religio.*"

This calling of a truce between the followers of the rival religious schools in Germany effected for the time

being a harmony of obedience to the Emperor. Clement was to pay the penalty for attempting to turn against Charles. In the beginning of 1527 a German army, mostly composed of self-styled Lutherans and under the command of the redoubtable Lutheran general, Frundsberg, crossed the Alps, marched upon Rome, sacked the Holy City as it had not been sacked since the time of Alaric, and held the pontiff in a virtual thraldom.

By 1529, however, Charles was desirous of having Clement favourably disposed, and with at least the appearance of being a free agent. He made up the quarrel, though with a comfortable certainty that the pope would not neglect his interests, and began again to turn his attention to the practicability of suppressing the Lutheran movement. The anti-Lutheran princes of Germany were eager, and the second Diet of Spires reverted to the position taken up at Worms. The protest of the other party earned for them the title of "Protestants," which was for a long time to come to be the accepted name of all who resisted papal pretensions.

The resistance of the Protestant princes prevented the effective carrying out of repressive measures as the result of the Diet; and in 1530 a fresh Diet, at which the Emperor was present, was held at Augsburg. A decree was now issued forbidding the teaching of Protestant doctrines, accompanied, however, by an Imperial promise that a General Council should be called to decide religious questions. Nevertheless, the Protestants were by no means prepared to accept this position, and, in the immediate expectation of war, banded themselves together in the League of

Schmalkald. But the imminence of the struggle was averted by Turkish aggression, which made it necessary for all parties to agree to a temporary *modus vivendi*. The civil war was postponed till after the death of Luther, nearly sixteen years later.

From the time when Luther nailed up his theses against Tetzel on the church door, the Lutheran doctrines were steadily formulating and spreading. Melanchthon, the wise scholar, was early joined to the Wittenberg professor, refining and moderating. At the same time Zwingli was laying at Zurich the foundations of the Swiss school of reformers, characterised by less mysticism, and, it may be, by a sterner logic than the German school. From the first, the two groups did not greatly love one another; and as time passed, and the diversities between them became more marked, their mutual amenities were to be matched only by the anti-Roman diatribes of each. During this first period, however, they stood united against the pope; and the foreigners flocking to Zurich as well as to Wittenberg absorbed the more Puritan ideas, which Calvin was to develop and systematise a few years later. The immunity of the Lutherans and the independence of the Swiss gave an asylum to ecclesiastical rebels from other lands, who were safe among them for many a year before England would allow them to raise their voices within her coasts.

In 1530 was drawn up the Confession of Augsburg, which was the German Protestants' confession of faith. It was the first great expression of a standard of faith other than that of Rome. It was tentative, not final; but it serves as a landmark, a dividing line,

besides showing the inevitable trend of opinion when once a severance from Rome should be effected. Protestantism had announced itself as a system, not a mere negation. It had also definitely carried itself beyond the limits of that intellectual and moral revision to which Erasmus and More had pinned their faith.

CHAPTER IV

A Tender Conscience: 1503–1529

In its earlier stage, as we have seen, the movement for Reformation in England had taken its rise to a great extent among men who stood for culture, order, and development. They contemplated no schism and no revolution, but a practical application of fundamental principles to the removal of palpable abuses. It had been their task to educate intelligent opinion to a recognition of the need both for reform and for order. On the Continent, Luther, with a shrewder insight it may be, and without the opportunity for steady educative work, found himself forced into a much more revolutionary and undoubtedly to him much more congenial attitude of open war with the existing system. But neither the wit and learning of an Erasmus nor the passionate appeal to truth against falsehood of a Luther were to control the changes in England. They were to be the direct outcome of the matrimonial proclivities of a monarch whose capacity for discovering the identity of the dictates of conscience and convenience is quite one of the most surprising phenomena of history.

Alliance with the Spanish Crown had been a leading feature of the policy of Henry VII.; and to that end

his elder son Prince Arthur had been wedded to Catherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella. But the death of the prince destroyed the plan; till the difficulty was met by the proposal that the widow should be married to Prince Henry, now heir to the English throne. The Church, however, forbade the marriage of any man to his deceased brother's wife. But Julius II., the pope of the day, was ready to give his assistance, and to grant a dispensation making the marriage lawful; and the new contract was carried out.

The validity of the process was formally recognised but secretly doubted at the time. The English king was not altogether sorry to have a loophole for breaking the alliance by challenging the marriage if European complications should render such a step profitable; and the prince, at his instigation, signed a sort of protest which might be produced later on if occasion demanded it. However, the dispensation was granted, the marriage took effect, and Henry and Catherine lived as lawful man and wife for many years: children being born to them, of whom one only survived, to become known in after days as Queen Mary of England.

In justification of the dispensation, it was declared that the first marriage had not been carried beyond the stage of ceremonial completion, and therefore had been only technical and formal. The dissolution of a marriage under such circumstances being accounted no breach of the moral law, it was generally held that so far a dispensation treating it as of no effect was legitimate. But the dispensation issued was absolute, not limited by any condition as to the first marriage being

incomplete: a claim being thus asserted to set aside what was recognised as the moral law, and to sanction a breach of it.

So long then as it was convenient to maintain the validity of the marriage between Henry and Catherine, it was easy to argue that in any case the pope had assumed the moral responsibility for the whole affair, while there was no appeal from his judgment as to its ecclesiastical legality; and at any rate, if any cavils were raised, the moral point could be set aside by the assertion that the first marriage had been purely formal. But when it became convenient to set the marriage aside, it could be argued that the dispensation, by claiming to abrogate the moral law, was invalidated altogether; that the formal nature of the first marriage could not be maintained in face of the form of the dispensation; and that the pope could not relieve the parties to the contract of their responsibility for continuing in a relation contrary to the divine law.

When Martin Luther faced and defied the papal authority, King Henry took the field against him with a book which earned for him from the pope the title of Defender of the Faith. The Spanish alliance was in full favour at the time; Charles was the queen's nephew; to challenge the authority of the pope then would have been *ipso facto* to call in question the validity of the marriage with Catherine, as the king saw shrewdly enough; and he maintained that authority with proportionate vigour. Sir Thomas More, who was clearly in doubt as to the degree of authority to be attributed to the pope, was even persuaded by Henry to examine the question afresh;

whereby, unfortunately for himself, he was converted to the view then prevailing in the royal mind; with the result that, being a thoroughly sincere person, he could not be reconverted when the royal mind changed.

Before long, however, the political situation shifted; so did the personal. As early as 1522, Wolsey's sentiments towards the Spanish alliance had been modified by the failure of Charles v. to support him as candidate for the papacy. Another papal election in the ensuing year confirmed the change of view. After the battle of Pavia in 1525, the Emperor showed that he intended to work out his own policy on the Continent without consideration for Henry, broke off the scheme by which he was to marry the young Princess Mary, and married the Portuguese Infanta instead.

Also, Mary herself was the only living child of the marriage, and there was now no prospect of Catherine having a son; so that there was very grave danger of a renewal of the wars of succession which had so recently devastated England.

Also, the king's eye had been taken by Anne Boleyn, a young maid of honour to the queen.

The combination of circumstances aroused Henry's slumbering conscience. Supposing after all his marriage was no marriage? As long as he believed, and his wife believed, in its validity, no one, of course, could hold them seriously guilty for having acted on the belief; but if one of them came to doubt it, conscience clearly demanded the thorough investigation of the question. It was even possible that a really tender conscience might refuse to be set at rest by any pronouncement, however authoritative, which did not

positively confirm the doubts. The train of argument is easy to follow out. In the long-run, if conscience was to be appeased, an authoritative announcement would have to be procured against the marriage.

To begin with, the king and his great minister were in convenient agreement. As yet there was no question of challenging papal authority generally; that would not have fallen within the range of Wolsey's schemes, as he was still ambitious of acquiring the popedom, and had no mind to see it shorn of any of its powers. The immediate purpose was to invite the present pope to declare that his predecessor had gone beyond his authority—to affirm, in short, that the decision of one pope might be revised by a successor: to the end that the marriage might be annulled.

The attitude of the chief actors and of the general public on the question is interesting. To Catherine, from every imaginable point of view, the proposition was intolerable: it was a ruse to get rid of her, and nothing else, the king's unlawful desires being the motive. Henry for his part was willing to be quit of her on political grounds; he was more than willing to be rid of her on personal grounds; and he may even have persuaded himself that he desired it on conscientious grounds. The Cardinal desired it for reasons of State. There were many men who honestly held that the marriage had been inadmissible on any pretext; but even of these not a few were of opinion that a greater wrong was involved in invalidating than in maintaining it in form. The people at large sympathised with the queen, and regarded the whole scheme as the work of the Cardinal, and as standing utterly self-condemned in consequence. The pope was anxious

to conciliate Henry, but more anxious to conciliate the Emperor, while he was also very much afraid of any step derogatory to his own claims.

The earlier stages of the intriguing which went on are obscure. When the question was first mooted, the king declared that his one wish was to be certified that his marriage really was legitimate; and it is tolerably certain that Archbishop Warham, Fisher of Rochester, and others were deceived. A plan by which the archbishops and the cardinal were to cite Henry before them for living with his brother's widow fell through. So did the surprisingly audacious suggestion that Catherine should "enter religion," and the king have a dispensation for a new marriage without raising the question of the validity of the previous one at all. Finally, the pope was persuaded to appoint a Commission, consisting of Wolsey and Cardinal Campeggio, to try the case; but Campeggio's instructions were entirely obstructive; and after a long series of checks and delays, Clement in 1529 revoked the whole case to Rome.

Henry was an adept in finding scapegoats: and his anger fell upon Wolsey, whose power was torn from him ruthlessly. But matters were serious. It was evident that Clement would not carry out Henry's wishes, however much he might profess his desire to do so; in spite of some plain speaking by Stephen Gardiner, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, who hinted, not obscurely, that if the pope could not see his way, England might cease to recognise the necessity for a pope.

Here then the turning-point was reached. Hitherto the utmost that had been contemplated by any large

or influential body of opinion had been some sort of moral reformation, an attempt to elevate the tone of the clergy, and to suppress obviously corrupt and corrupting usages. Hitherto there had been no desire for a definite breach with Rome, or assertion of independence, but only for a constitutional limitation of her supremacy. Now the king was realising that nothing short of independence was likely to bring him the satisfaction of his desires on which he had set his heart; a large section of the clergy, including such men as Gardiner, were ready to go with him. Among laymen, hostility to the clerical organisation was on the increase, and Lutheran doctrines were being regarded with diminishing suspicion. As a great ecclesiastic, Wolsey's unpopularity had intensified anti-clerical feeling; and his downfall was the signal for a new and pronounced policy to be set in motion.

CHAPTER V

The King's Instruments

It was at this stage that greatness began to be thrust upon Thomas Cranmer.

Hitherto the future archbishop's life had been essentially academic in character. Born in 1487, the son of a Nottinghamshire gentleman of no great estate, he went up to Jesus College, Cambridge—a recent foundation—at the age of fourteen, after a school career which he recalled with little satisfaction. The schoolmaster, we gather, was a bully, and may very well have intensified the boy's natural timidity. At Cambridge, Cranmer took to his books, and in course of time achieved a Fellowship in 1511; in which year Erasmus began to teach there. Hitherto the young man had followed the usual course of studying the works of the schoolmen; now, the arrival of the apostle of the New Learning turned his mind to more attractive and enlightening branches of scholarship. There was also a brief matrimonial episode; he lost his Fellowship by marrying a wife, who died a year later. He was then re-elected to his Fellowship, and took Orders not long afterwards. The publication in 1516 of the edition of the Greek Testament by Erasmus was followed by a devotion on Cranmer's

part to the study of Scripture, and from that time onward till the fateful year 1529 his career was studious, uneventful, and only in the most strictly academical sense distinguished.

There, reading, lecturing, annotating, analysing, storing up learning, living a stainless and untroubled life, he would have remained to the end of his days, had fate permitted. But fate did not permit. A chance phrase in a chance conversation brought the retiring scholar under the royal notice; and no monarch has ever been endowed with a keener eye or a shrewder judgment in discovering the instruments most perfectly adapted to his requirements. The scholar was drawn from his cloister, plunged into the whirl of half-understood political intrigue, and forced to be a statesman when nature had intended him for a college don. Almost without warning he found laid on his shoulders the responsibility for steering the Church through the stormiest seas. From Henry's point of view, no better selection could have been made; but Cranmer himself must have felt many a time that there was a strong element of "cursed spite" in the case.

In July 1529 the pope revoked the cause between Henry and Catherine to Rome. The king left London for Waltham Abbey; having in his train Edward Foxe, Provost of King's, and Stephen Gardiner, Master of Trinity Hall, who had both been much employed in his affairs, while the latter had used strong language on his behalf to Pope Clement, as already narrated. It so happened that these two met Cranmer at the house where they were guests. The divorce was, of course, the subject in all men's mouths.

The idea of appealing to the universities at large for an opinion on the merits of the case had already been mooted and acted upon, and Cranmer was one of the doctors selected at Cambridge to examine the question. Naturally it became the subject of conversation; with the result that Cranmer propounded the momentous suggestion that the appeal to the universities and their answer would be an adequate ground for the king to act upon directly.

Now the original idea had probably amounted only to this: that a clear expression of opinion from the learned experts of Europe would be very difficult for the pope to resist. But the essence of Cranmer's proposal was that if the decision of the learned on the point of conscience was in his favour, Henry would be entitled to dispense with the judgment of Rome on the matter altogether. It was in effect a denial of the pope's claim to authority as the ultimate court of appeal; a virtual assertion of the supremacy of national as against papal jurisdiction. It gave Henry precisely the keynote he wanted. Gardiner, in Rome, had hinted broadly enough at rebellion, but at rebellion naked and unashamed. He did not deny the papal authority, but threatened to ignore it. The new position was quite different; since it affirmed the higher authority of the sovereign. Once the king's own judgment was clear on the doubtful problem, he was free to act. An appeal to the universities would clear his judgment,—an end which he had failed to obtain by appealing to Rome,—and then the dictation of Rome would be worthless. Papal authority was reduced to the level of an expert opinion; ultimate judgment reverted to the king.

It was a curious piece of irony that Gardiner should have been one of the men to bring Cranmer under the royal notice; but so it was. The conversation was reported to Henry, and Henry at once perceived possibilities. The man who had thus seized "the right sow by the ear," committing himself to a sufficiently far-reaching doctrine of royal supremacy as a mere matter of academic theory and in indubitable good faith, might clearly be most useful. Cranmer, reluctantly enough in all probability, was summoned to the king's presence, and started on his career as the king's mouthpiece.

Cranmer was endowed with a brain not lacking in subtlety; but it was the subtlety of the scholar, not that of the man of affairs. In his dealings with men he was habitually guileless and unsuspicious; his natural inclination was to think well of his neighbour. The king wanted Cranmer to believe in him, and he laid himself out with that lordly geniality and imposing frankness which he could always command, to captivate the Cambridge scholar, and convince him of his own purity of motive and self-sacrificing conscientiousness. Then he invited his paragon of doctors to put his views of the situation into a book. During the writing it was as well that the writer should dwell in a congenial atmosphere; such an atmosphere as might be found in the house of the Earl of Wiltshire. The earl was the father of Anne Boleyn. Cranmer became a warm admirer of the future queen, who for her part continued to be his loyal friend to the last. It is easy to see the necessary effect on a mind like Cranmer's—essentially tender, trustful, responsive to all kindly influences. His goodwill being enlisted on

the side to which his judgment naturally inclined, the king knew that he had secured a supporter in whom his confidence need never fail. With men like More and Fisher, conscience was too independent. A Wolsey might be too much influenced by personal ambitions. Gardiner had too large a share of the wisdom of the serpent. But Cranmer was not ambitious; he was not astute; and although he was not likely to go against his conscience, he was of the type of those who take their conscience with them into unexpected situations. The chances were that if Cranmer found the royal conscience and his own in opposition he would think that his own had made a mistake.

Henry was adroit in his arrangements. Between July 1529 and the end of the year, the future archbishop was chiefly engaged on his treatise about the divorce. Then a fresh embassy was despatched to Rome; the Earl of Wiltshire was at its head, and Cranmer was in his train. He did not return till September 1530; and before many months of the next year had elapsed he was despatched on an embassy to the Emperor, remaining abroad till, on Archbishop Warham's death in August 1532, he was sent for to be consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, being installed in the primacy on March 30, 1533. Thus he would seem to have been but a few months in England during the three years 1530, 1531, and 1532; while throughout his sojourn abroad he was surrounded by anti-papal influences calculated to strengthen his readiness to support the king in any reforming measures he might see fit to adopt.

The year 1529 is a very important landmark. It

was the year in which the king discovered Cranmer, to provide his policy with an air of learning and piety; in which he acquired Thomas Cromwell, to scheme, devise, execute, and bear the blame; and in which he summoned the Parliament which was to voice the zealous support of a loyal nation, obediently proclaiming the wisdom and justice of the king's measures.

If it is difficult to arrive at a just estimate of Cranmer's character and abilities, the difficulty with Thomas Cromwell is ten times greater. To Mr. Froude, who was a reckless devotee of force, he is a kind of St. Michael, leading the hosts who followed the banner of Truth and Righteousness to shatter the battalions of Falsehood and Vice; a veritable soldier of God, hating evil, smiting relentlessly and fearlessly; a pioneer, hewing at the roots of the Roman upas tree. Historians of another colour liken him rather to Lucifer, unless such a comparison is too discourteous to the Prince of Darkness. For them, he was a usurer, a liar, a coward, a traitor, a hypocrite. Justice and mercy were commodities for which he had no use. His loyalty to the fallen Cardinal was a sham, and his policy was dictated exclusively by greed and ambition.

It may certainly be said without hesitation that Mr. Froude's estimate is entirely incredible, and the counter-description is highly imaginative, being arrived at by systematically accepting every evil rumour as proved truth. It is not possible to transform Cromwell into an attractive personality or even an admirable one; but on the moral side, his courage, loyalty, and unflinching resolution cannot in fairness be impeached, while his intellectual forcefulness is beyond dispute.

Of his origin, nothing is known for certain. Rumour made him the son of a blacksmith. However that may have been, he found his way to Italy[1] at an early age, and there became what he afterwards himself described as a "ruffian," probably a trooper in one of the mercenary bands attached to one or another of the nobles in that most unhappy land. There, morals of any kind were at a discount and intelligence was at a premium. In effect, it was a universally received maxim that if you had an end in view it was contemptible to shrink from the effective means of achieving it merely because conscience would be outraged. Fear of poison and of the assassin's dagger were leading methods of persuasion employed by princes and bravoes. The practices of the Borgias, Sforzas, Medicis, and the rest were reduced to principles, and enunciated by Niccolo Macchiavelli in the most astonishing text-book of State-craft that ever was penned, with the same placidly scientific air as if they had been a series of indisputable mathematical propositions. What startles us in the *Prince* is not the immorality and wickedness of the advice given to the would-be ruler of men, but the entire absence of shame, the apparent unconsciousness that there is anything at all shocking about it. It would seem as if the bare idea of right and wrong having anything to do with political objects or methods had never so much as crossed the great diplomatist's mind. The writer does indeed remark on the practical uses of a specious pretence of virtue in mollifying popular

[1] Dr. Brewer was not satisfied with the evidence even on this point; but there seems to be no particular reason why the statement should have been invented, while its truth would go far to explain Cromwell's character and methods.

prejudices, and would even convey that where there is really nothing more to be gained by the immoral than the moral course, it is perhaps better to follow the latter. It is also true that Macchiavelli's personal standard of action was that of a man of genuine patriotism, courage, and honour. The significant thing is, that such a man, a statesman of the first rank, a man of the finest culture and of the nicest taste, should have produced such a treatise as if there were nothing out of the common about the principles it laid down, and that he did so for the very good reason that they were in fact the everyday principles of his time and country.

This was the time and country where Cromwell acquired his education as a man of the world; an adventurer with his way to make, and the will and the skill to make it. If the political and personal atmosphere were calculated to nurture sheer unmitigated cynicism, the ecclesiastical atmosphere was no better, for the corruption was deeper rooted, wider spread, and more flagrantly palpable than anywhere else in Europe. On the papal throne the Borgia had been succeeded first by a soldier-pope, and then by the Medici, whose refined paganism was hardly more appropriate in the Vicar of Christ than had been the blackguardism of Alexander VI. It was his visit to Italy that first shocked Martin Luther into a full consciousness of the reality of the general corruption. Nothing but intensity of devotion could have saved a young man in Cromwell's position from acquiring in that country a supreme contempt for ecclesiastical pretensions, and a total disbelief in ecclesiastical morality.

Another lesson, easily learnt and laid to heart by an adventurer of the future vicar-general's capacity, was the supreme importance to any one with his way to make of becoming a thorough man of business; and that for two very good reasons. He must acquire wealth, and he must become important to some person of higher importance, if he was to climb the ladder. Wealth he wanted, not for the sake of ease or luxury or hoarding, but as an instrument of power; and he acquired it without superfluous scrupulosity as to methods. He had, it would seem, no more hesitation in receiving than in giving a bribe; but when he entered on his later career as the hammer of the Church and the nobility, he distinguished. From those who were in the way, he took no bribes to let them stay; but he extracted large sums as the price of mercy from those whom he could have afforded to ignore. In the days of his obscurity, he added money-lending to practice in the lower branches of the legal profession. In the course of time he obtained a seat in Parliament, succeeded in attaching himself to the great Cardinal's entourage, acquired his confidence, and found remunerative employment as his agent in the ordering of his colleges and the manipulation of his finances. It is not suggested that he defrauded the Cardinal himself, but he was very commonly charged with defrauding other parties concerned in the transactions with which he was entrusted.

In October 1529 the Cardinal fell. Cromwell stood by him stubbornly and publicly. His detractors to-day declare that this was due solely to his astute perception that in this course lay the best chance of saving his own skin; but the game was a singularly

audacious one to play, and at the time he was given full credit for exceptionally meritorious loyalty. He elected to stand by his master and face the storm—in his own characteristic phrase, "to make or mar." When even the gracious Thomas More, succeeding Wolsey as Chancellor, could not, if the Chronicler Hall is to be credited, refrain from insulting the fallen minister, Cromwell boldly took up the cudgels publicly in Parliament; while characteristically trusting in private to the sedative influence of coin judiciously laid out.

How he obtained the king's personal favour is uncertain. According to the most favourable view, Henry's admiration for his loyalty won him; but the true explanation probably lies in the king's unfailing perception of the best instruments for his own purposes. He had already discovered in Cranmer the combination of learning, pliancy, and virtue which he wanted for some of his objects; and in Cromwell he perceived the servant who would be at once absolutely faithful and absolutely unscrupulous. It is likely enough that the secretary seized the first opportunity of propounding to the king the plan of openly setting the papacy at defiance; but that could hardly have served to bring him into favour, as he had been forestalled in the idea by Cranmer. Whatever the reason was, however, the early months of 1530 saw Thomas Cromwell thoroughly installed in Henry's favour, instead of being crushed as his many ill-wishers had undoubtedly hoped and expected. As yet, however, the time had not arrived for making full use either of Cranmer or Cromwell. The moderate men were to have their turn; More was to initiate reform, and Warham was to lend it his authority.

CHAPTER VI

The Supreme Head: 1529–1534

There are four aspects in which the Reformation as carried out by Henry requires to be considered—his attitude to the pope; to ecclesiastical administration; to clerical emoluments; and to doctrine.

In respect of the first, from 1529 we observe a rapid advance towards the flat denial of papal authority; in which the king is supported with a whole heart by Cranmer, and by the majority of the laity; and with some hesitation by the generality of the clergy, at least up to the eleventh hour.

On the ecclesiastical organisation, the royal claim to supreme control is pressed with steadily increasing severity, but always under protest from the clergy, with the exception of Cranmer and some others.

On ecclesiastical emoluments, the king's clutches are laid with merciless rigour, upon pretexts more or less specious; beginning with exactions by way of fine for illegalities, and proceeding to wholesale confiscation. Throughout, the king appears to have the moral support of Cranmer and a very few others of the clergy, of so many of the laity as are enriched by the spoils, and of a section of honest but fanatical re-

formers: in the later stages at least, popular sentiment, outside Parliament, is with the victims.

In respect of doctrine, the line is clear. Accepted catholic doctrine is maintained, only the most flagrant vulgar distortions of it being checked. Heresies preached by men who had been imbibing the teaching of the German and Swiss reformers are repressed, and the preachers subjected to the extreme penalties of the law. Cranmer is allowed, indeed, to import a mild Lutheran flavour even into official utterances, but the flavour is very mild. On all leading points there is no apparent departure from the doctrines of the old Church.

In fine, while it inevitably followed from the measures taken that the authority of the ecclesiastical body was undermined by its subordination to the secular sovereign, while its wealth was appropriated largely to secular uses, and while the papacy was set at defiance, the whole scope and aim of the Reformation as contemplated by Henry and his instruments was not doctrinal but political, and incidentally in some degree social. It was a part of that larger scheme which had absolutism for its goal; and in that scheme, the function of Cromwell was active achievement, that of Cranmer passive acceptance.

The challenge to the papal authority takes form primarily in the continuation of the story of the divorce, and secondarily in the enactments resisting specific papal claims in respect of church government and ecclesiastical emoluments; merging finally in the claim of Royal Supremacy.

The divorce was, in fact, the real end the king had in view; he had personally, as far as we can judge, no

desire for a severance from Rome if that specific object could be attained without it. Among the clergy, however, including many of those who were most emphatically catholic and orthodox, there was a strong antagonism to the domination of the pope, creating a large party favourable to the divorce as a crucial point in the contest; while Cromwell was probably much more definitely resolved than his master on getting rid of the papal claim in order to assert the royal claim the more decisively. Fisher of Rochester from the beginning, and Sir Thomas More in a very short time, realised and dreaded the completeness of the coming breach, and the secular intention of its promoters; but the very men whose names in later years were most intimately associated with the Romanist reaction were at this period prominent and even violent supporters of the king's policy.

As being the most decisive factor in breaking off the Roman connection, we may deal first with the divorce proceedings. The principle at stake having been explained, their progress does not require to be followed in great detail. The judgments of the universities were obtained during the early months of 1530; they were indecisive; they were very far from unanimous; and it is by no means easy to affirm that they were on the whole more favourable to one party than to the other. It was, moreover, notorious that every available kind of outside pressure was brought to bear on both sides, and that the judgments delivered were largely influenced by issues which, judicially speaking, had nothing to do with the real point. The king's party, however, declared that the justice of his cause was now conclusively demonstrated. But no

results followed. Cranmer at the papal court could get nothing tangible. Sent abroad again in 1531, he spent a year for the most part among the German Lutherans, and some emphatic expressions of opinion were obtained from German and Swiss reformers; but the pope would do nothing, and Catherine stoutly refused to acknowledge any adverse judgment but the pope's own. In August 1532 Archbishop Warham died; the king fixed on Cranmer as his successor, and also made up his own mind to a decisive step. He married Anne privately, probably in November. Cranmer after long delay returned in January, and was installed in the archbishopric at the end of March (1533).

This marks a decisive stage. Papal Bulls for Cranmer's appointment had been duly obtained; but, as a preliminary to installation, he took an unprecedented course. The king had recently discovered that all bishops owned a divided allegiance, in view of the separate vows they had to take of loyalty to the pope and loyalty to the Crown. Cranmer seized the opportunity to declare for the Crown; prefacing his oath to the pope with a declaration that he would only hold it binding so far as it did not clash with his oath to the king.

The installation was immediately followed by the passing of the great Act in Restraint of Appeals, which was in fact a national abjuration of papal jurisdiction. That it was passed with a direct personal object, as a sort of royal relief bill, does not alter the fact that it was in itself a dignified and constitutional declaration of an independence which in theory had never been wholly relinquished, though in practice it had been in habitual abeyance. The Act affirmed the final char-

acter of the jurisdiction of the spiritual courts within the realm of England, forbidding appeals from them to Rome. It expressed directly the position which Cranmer had himself propounded when he was still no more than a Cambridge scholar.

It remained only to add the finishing touch. The new archbishop proceeded at once to ask leave to hold a court to settle the king's matter; and leave was given in terms which conveyed with sufficient emphasis the subordinate position which the primate had accepted. While the arrangements were going forward, Convocation was called upon to deliver its opinion on the validity of the dispensation; and gave its verdict in the king's favour. Cranmer called his court: the queen refused to attend, and was declared contumacious; on May 23 judgment was given voiding the marriage. Five days later, Cranmer proceeded to declare the marriage with Anne Boleyn lawful and valid, and her public coronation followed immediately.

The protest of Rome was met by both king and archbishop appealing from the pope to the higher authority of the next General Council; the strongest opponents of the divorce among the bishops admitting that the principle of doing so was valid. Nevertheless, for the space of another year there still seemed to be a possibility of reconciliation; since there was a party at Rome which dreaded the effects of a complete severance from England. On the other hand, the Emperor's party was urgent, and its urgency carried the day. The king might recede from the directly anti-papal enactments of his Parliament; his friends at the papal court were hopeful of obtaining a secure promise that if he submitted his case to the papal court he should

have a decision entirely in his favour. The Imperialists, realising the danger of the scale being turned against them if delays were prolonged, hurried matters forward; and the door of reconciliation, such as it was, was finally closed by the definite pronouncement in March 1534, that the marriage with Catherine was good and valid, and the marriage with Anne illegal.

In England, in the meantime, the anti-papal and anti-ecclesiastical policies had been at work side by side.

In the former category there had as yet been only one important Act, besides the decisive one in Restraint of Appeals; and this, the first Act in Restraint of Annates, had emanated directly from the clergy themselves. It had been the custom for Rome to demand annates, otherwise first-fruits or the first year's income, from every bishop or archbishop on appointment; and this impost was a very cruel one, especially of course in cases where a See was vacated by death or for other reasons soon after occupation. Gardiner, recently appointed to Winchester, had been obliged to borrow heavily to meet the papal claims. An Act was accordingly passed (April 1532), allowing only a tax of 5 per cent.; and further laying down that even if the pope refused the Bulls, the consecrations should proceed and be held valid.

The Act was in form one for the relief of the clergy from a papal impost; but the king had no great interest in relieving the clergy—as he proved not long afterwards by having the annates diverted by Act of Parliament to his own use. At the time, however, he seems to have intended the Act chiefly as a weapon to be held in reserve and launched against the pope at his discretion. The pope himself was only allowed to

know that there was something brewing; what precisely the something was he could not discover till after the divorce was completed.

But between the close of 1529 and the final rupture with Rome, the attack on clerical abuses, clerical privileges, clerical emoluments, and clerical authority was carried on with increasing vigour.

It began with the opening of Parliament in November 1529. Three bills were brought in, which did in fact deal with real abuses, but were recognised by Bishop Fisher at the outset as being specious precursors of an attack on the Church, at least in the case of the Probate and Mortuaries Acts, which were in restraint of the excessive fees enforced by the clerical courts. The third, an Act against Pluralities and Non-residence, was in part a blow at papal nominees, and would have been generally admitted to be a really sound reform, but for the schedule of exceptions, which was too conveniently favourable to the promoters of the bill.

In the following year (1530) Cranmer was abroad on the embassy to the pope, and the business of obtaining the opinion of the universities was in active operation. Cromwell, now in the king's personal service, was rising in influence; but Henry was ostensibly occupied a good deal with the process of heresy-hunting and suppressing the literature inspired by the Reformers, who were issuing it from German printing presses.

At the close of the year, however, almost immediately on the death of Wolsey, he announced that the clergy and the Commons had brought themselves into a perilous position under the Statute of Præmunire, by accepting the legatine authority of the late

Cardinal. The mere fact that he had himself been responsible did not weigh with the monarch; who impressed upon the clergy the advisability of their making haste to purchase pardon lest they should be subjected to a more stringent process of forfeiture. Convocation, meeting in January (1531), recognised the wisdom of submission, and offered above a hundred thousand pounds—an enormous sum in those days. This, however, did not satisfy the king. He proceeded—and here perhaps the hand of Cromwell may be detected—to demand also a formal recognition of his own authority in matters ecclesiastical, including the acknowledgment that the "king is the only Protector and Supreme Head of the Church and clergy of England." It was indeed implied that no new claim was being put forward; that there was here nothing beyond the formal statement of the authority which had been asserted and implicitly acknowledged for many generations. Nevertheless, it was not without grave misgivings that the demand was received; nay, in its primary form it was rejected. The aged Archbishop Warham, however, found a door of escape for his flock from what had seemed a dangerous *impasse*, by introducing the saving clause, "so far as the laws of Christ permit." In this form the declaration was put to the Upper House of Convocation. No one spoke. "Silence," the archbishop warned them, "is assent"; a voice replied, "Then are we all silent"—and so the declaration was passed. One point, however, must have remained obvious—that it would be exceedingly difficult to argue that any claim the king might put forward on the strength of the general declaration could be held void on the strength of the saving clause.

What may have been the precise object of the king and his advisers in requiring this declaration, it is difficult to say; since the notion that it contained any new claim was expressly repudiated. Apparently it was put forward merely as a feeler, for a very much more serious move was to follow ere long.

In January 1532 a direct attack was opened by the Commons, who presented a "Supplication" against the "Ordinaries." It began by attributing the alarming spread of heretical opinions and literature to the unsatisfactory methods of the ecclesiastical courts, and from this it worked up to the position that the Church framed and put in force canons and regulations contrary to royal authority, good government, and justice; further petitioning that no canons should have force until they had received the royal assent. Incidentally great stress was laid on the abuses in the ecclesiastical courts, although the advocates of the clergy inclined to maintain that these were, at the worst, no whit more scandalous than those of the lay courts.

Convocation was actively engaged in preparing new canons and regulations for discipline and the removal of abuses when the thunderbolt fell. Some delay had been caused by a quarrel between the king and the Commons over the "Bill of Wards," intended to legalise sundry exactions on the part of the Lords. The Commons, touched at their tender point—their pockets—refused the Wards Bill; being no more minded to submit to the exactions of the Lords than to those of the clergy; a position which seems to be logical, but is apt to be contemned as proving that sordid motives alone weighed seriously with them. It would, however, appear that to have submitted in the

one case, while clamouring for redress in the other, would have been both illogical and pusillanimous. However, the effect was that the "Supplication against the Ordinaries" was not presented in Convocation till April; when it was accompanied by a demand for an answer.

The answer given, generally attributed to Gardiner (now Bishop of Winchester), was lacking neither in dignity nor in astuteness. It maintained that the accusations made were general, not specific, so that it was impossible to set about disproving them. In respect of the principle, it was affirmed that the Church was bound to make laws which could not be submitted to lay authority; and that the laws of the land and the laws of the Church were both derived from the same source, namely, the Word of God, and could not really conflict; while the king was entreated with the customary compliments to prove himself once more, as he had so signally done in the past, the Protector of the Church.

Which answer the king condemned as "slender," and demanded something more solid. Also he signified his displeasure with Gardiner for the part he had taken. The bishop's reply was an effective though diplomatic argument *ad hominem*, appealing to the king's own book against Luther as the *locus classicus* in which the case for the Church was presented convincingly, and implying that he could not help remaining convinced thereby until His Majesty should bring to light the new data by which he had been induced to change his mind. It does not seem at all impossible that Gardiner's display of independence at this juncture was responsible some months later for the selection in his place of Cranmer to succeed Warham in the primacy.

Convocation returned a second answer, in which they expressed their readiness that, in consideration of the king's extraordinary learning and wisdom, no future regulations they might make should be enforced on the laity, unless the royal assent had been given; and that in respect of existing canons, any which were suspected of being against the laws of the realm should be examined and modified. Finally, however, they were forced to assent to the two articles which constituted what was known as the "Submission of the Clergy"; promising to enact no new constitutions or canons except with the royal assent, and to submit to a Commission consisting of the king with sixteen of the clergy and sixteen laymen such of the existing canons as were held to be prejudicial. The remaining canons to continue in force.

This Submission of the clergy was a real act of surrender. There never had been, indeed, any practical power of promulgating constitutions which could override the ordinary law; but short of that the Church had claimed and exercised the right of enforcing her spiritual or quasi-spiritual legislation without submitting it to the approbation of any temporal authority. That right was now wiped out. At the same time it is possible to acquire the erroneous impression that the right of spiritual legislation was transferred to the State; whereas in form a right of veto only was conceded to the Crown. Whatever the practical effect might be when the crown happened to be worn by a Henry VIII., there was here no recognition, expressed or implied, of parliamentary control.

Nevertheless, it was felt that the ecclesiastical organisation had suffered a very serious blow. Thomas

More, most loyal of lay Churchmen, felt that his position as Chancellor, irksome from the beginning, was now impossible, and he resigned. Warham, already so far enfeebled with age that Stokesley, Bishop of London, had of late generally acted for him, appears to have been quite broken down, and died some four months later, leaving as his last public utterance a protest against all the measures which had been aimed against the authority of the pope or the privileges of the Church. The selection of Cranmer to succeed him showed that independence of spirit was not a characteristic which the king desired in his primate.

This attack on the hitherto acknowledged constitutional rights of Convocation and the authority of the spiritual courts was accompanied by two measures directed against what were for the most part genuine abuses. The first of these dealt with the curious institution known as "benefit of clergy," under which all "clerks" charged with offences against the law could have their cases withdrawn from the lay courts, and dealt with by the "Ordinaries." Originally this had amounted to something very like substituting trial by jury for trial by ordeal; but in course of time it had come to mean that anyone who could read or write escaped the hand of the king's law by claiming benefit of clergy, and very commonly got off with very inadequate penalties. Considering the extravagant barbarity of some of the punishments for minor offences then in vogue, it may well be doubted whether crime was really encouraged by ecclesiastical leniency; but the double system was clearly improper. For the time all that was done was to limit the benefit to the ordained clergy. The

second Act was a kind of appendix to the existing Statutes of Mortmain, being intended as a check on the transfer of property to the Church, and a countermove to the ingenious devices by which the Mortmain Statutes had been evaded.

Down to the close of 1533 the "Reformation," as here described, was a process of clearing the ground. The Act in Restraint of Appeals was a formal renunciation of papal allegiance; the marriage with Anne Boleyn, and the judgments on "the king's matter," delivered by the new archbishop, were practical demonstrations of the same principle, which the Annates Act had carried into the field of finance, or papal demands on the clergy. But while the Church's independence of the pope was being asserted, her dependence on the king was being emphasised and increased by the declaration of the royal supremacy, and by the submission of the clergy: and at the same time a series of Acts, which it was as yet reasonable to describe as being "in restraint of abuses," had been aimed at the authority and the emoluments of the ecclesiastical organisation. The whole was but the prelude to an assertion of the complete subordination of the Church to the Crown, of the Spirituality to the Temporal power, which amounted to a revolution; and to an application of the powers thus asserted, after a fashion wholly tyrannical, by methods grossly immoral. Abuses and corruptions there were, grave and plentiful enough; even for confiscations within reasonable limits strong arguments could be adduced. But for wholesale spoliation and humiliation, such as Henry and Cromwell enforced and Cranmer accepted, it is not possible in the records to find any adequate excuse;

except by the simple process of swallowing all the evidence on one side, however tainted, and ignoring all the evidence on the other, however independent.

The gain both to Church and State of once for all asserting complete independence of Rome, few will be found to dispute. The political need of abolishing anything like an *imperium in imperio*, of asserting the control of the nation in its temporal capacity as a State over the nation in its spiritual capacity as a Church, may be freely recognised. The justice of diverting a part of the vast wealth of a great organisation, accumulated on hypotheses largely ignored in its use, may be challenged, but may also be frankly defended. But the first was achieved by sacrificing an innocent and defenceless woman; the third was carried past all bounds, on the strength of evidence acquired by corruption and violence; and as to the second, it was carried through, in part at least, by threats of confiscation, and by calling into play retrospectively a law which the authorities, including the king himself, had deliberately set on one side. As to Cranmer's own share in the matter, he upheld the principle, but was not responsible for the method. Nevertheless, no predecessor of his in the Metropolitan See would have thus deliberately ranged himself on the side of the State against his Order. There is no sort of reason to doubt that in so doing he acted honestly according to his convictions; but it is scarcely surprising that the whole-hearted advocates of the claims of his Order find it difficult to speak of him otherwise than as a traitor to it. Still, to find in his action a demonstration of servility is certainly unreasonable, though it may not be unnatural.

CHAPTER VII

The Hand of Cromwell: 1534–1540

The parliamentary measures of 1534 were chiefly devoted to confirming previous declarations with increased vigour. The Submission of the Clergy and the Restraint of Appeals were combined in one Act. Moreover, according to the form of the Act, the enforcement of the existing canons and constitutions was to be carried out at the peril of the clergy: inasmuch as it was left to them to prove that such ordinances were not contrary to the prerogative and the public good, whereas the intention of the original "submission" clearly was that each one should be held valid until it should be challenged specifically. The Annates Act was renewed, accompanied by a formal appropriation to the king of the right to make all appointments to bishoprics, abbeys, etc., under the form of a *congé d'élire*; and all remaining pecuniary claims of Rome not wiped out thereby were abolished by the Act against "Peter Pence." The spring session concluded with the Act of Succession, excluding Mary, and fixing the succession on the offspring of Anne Boleyn; Elizabeth being by this time some six months old.

This Act was to be used to strike at two of the first

men in the country—More, whose European reputation ranked above that of any other Englishman living, and Fisher of Rochester, whose fame for character and learning rendered him incomparably the most admirable representative of the clergy. He, like Warham, had misliked Henry's marriage with Catherine, but had still more misliked the divorce. His was the voice which had been most boldly raised in defence of the ancient privileges of the Church. Almost, though not wholly, alone among the bishops, he had maintained the authority of Rome, as More also maintained it.

And now the whole country was required to swear to the Act of Succession; but the form of the oath prescribed, after the Act was passed, involved also a preamble abjuring Rome and affirming the Royal Supremacy. It might well be maintained that the main part of the oath was a necessity, to put all possible dispute out of question in the future; and even those who would uphold Mary's claim in theory might be required and expected to pledge themselves in act to Elizabeth; but it was obvious that to uphold papal authority in the Church, or to deny the possibility of recognising a layman as her head, could not reasonably be perverted into treason, or even into disloyalty.

Now it is one thing to demand of all subjects of the realm that they shall obey the law, and another to compel them on pain of being held guilty of treason to swear that they agree with the principle on which the law is based. It is not possible to suppose that the oath was constructed with any other object than the creation of an excuse for the humiliation or

destruction of all who questioned the Royal Supremacy. More and Fisher were both ready to swear to the succession, but not to the Supremacy; and so were the monks of the London Charterhouse, the Observants of Greenwich, and the Brigittines of Brentford. Cranmer was innocent enough to try to persuade the king to be content without insisting on the preamble—he had not realised that the object in view was to get the oath refused, not to get it accepted. The recalcitrants were imprisoned. Of the monks who protested, some gave way. In November the Act was renewed, this time including the form of the oath, retrospectively, to give some colour of law to the penalty heretofore illegally enforced. An Act was passed declaring the king to be Supreme Head (which as yet had only been affirmed by Convocation); a new Annates Bill was passed, appropriating to the Crown the first-fruits which had been withdrawn by the previous Acts from Rome; and a new Treasons Act was passed, by which the expression of opinion, or even the refusal to express an opinion, was converted into high treason, hitherto confined, by the Act of Edward III., to specific actions against the king.

More and Fisher remained stubborn: some of the monks also recanted their submission: and the result was a series of quasi-judicial murders which shocked Christendom not a little, but at the same time testified conclusively to the complete ruthlessness of the methods the king was resolved to adopt.

There is no doubt that this ruthlessness was by no means to Cranmer's liking. Himself of a gentle and forgiving disposition, he never relinquished an amiable belief that he could persuade recalcitrants of all sorts

to see the error of their ways, and an amiable desire to persuade the king to grant pardon on terms of submission. Unhappily his amiability was coupled with an entire lack of self-reliance, which to more virile minds assumes the aspect of a slavish obsequiousness to the ruling powers. Yet the man was no self-seeking hypocrite, no adventurer like Cromwell, no intriguer like half the courtiers of the day. But to all appearance, whenever he was brought into contact with a really masterful personality, such as Henry's or Cromwell's, he lost the power of independent judgment, and found himself impelled to surrender to the dominating force. Endowed with a singularly subtle intellect, he could maintain a thesis against any of his clerical brethren—academically; but he almost lost belief in any thesis which was flatly against the king's opinion.

Within a year of the execution of More and Fisher, this pitiful weakness in the primate was to exhibit a melancholy exemplification. Catherine was hardly in her grave when her successor on the throne was struck down to make way for a new queen. The truth of that cruel tragedy no man knows. There are only two positive facts ascertainable—that Anne's husband had chosen her successor before he struck at her; and that the charge against her came as a cruel shock to the archbishop. But the king professed himself convinced of her guilt, on what evidence we do not know; and Cranmer pronounced against her, on what evidence we do not know; not only declaring her guilty, but pronouncing the very marriage to have been invalid. On the theory of Cranmer's character just laid down, it may be doubted whether he held the evidence itself to be convincing, but it is likely that he believed the

king's opinion to be honest, and assumed, according to his wont, that the king must be in the right.

An identical spirit was shown four years later by Cranmer when Cromwell's day of retribution arrived. The archbishop could not bring himself to believe that one whom he had held in such regard and esteem had been guilty of the enormities laid to his charge; yet he could not stake his opinion against the king's infallibility. Henry could not be unjust; the guilt must be real. The frame of mind is not at all incredible. There are vast numbers of people who will reckon any evidence, short of ocular demonstration, as of a feather's weight when the authority they recognise declares against it. Henry had an extraordinary power of fascinating nearly everyone with whom he came in contact: Cranmer he seems to have entirely magnetised.

The deaths of Anne and of Cromwell were both merely casual incidents of the Reformation—illustrations of the temper of Henry, Cranmer, and others, but without serious influence on the course of events. The queen had ceased to be important after the validity of her marriage was recognised; the secretary had accomplished the work for which he was needed, before his master dispensed with his services. It was in 1535, with his appointment as Vicar-General, and vicegerent of the king in matters ecclesiastical, that those services were called into full play. The "Treasons" Act of the previous year had already enabled him to initiate a reign of terror by flooding the country with spies and informers, whose reports acquired a dangerous significance from the Act. Now he was enabled to open a campaign of spoliation.

Monastic institutions under any circumstances are open to grave objections, though it would be absurd to speak of them as altogether bad. Given a band of enthusiasts, bound to resist the allurements of the world and the flesh for themselves, and to do battle with the devil for others: some misapprehensions as to legitimate pleasures, some errors as to the method of conducting the war with evil, do not destroy the value of a self-denying example. But the system is by its nature peculiarly liable to abuse. If moral enthusiasm fades, principles and practice soon find themselves in contradiction, and the corrupting influence of misconduct is intensified. Vows taken before the novice realises what is involved in them become a burden too great to be borne, and the flavour of stolen fruit is proverbial. From the earliest times monks have been anathematised for abusing their profession; the tongue of scandal at all times loved to dwell upon their misdeeds; and there is a tolerably strong presumption that the tongue of scandal was not without excuse. The legal "benefit of clergy" protecting them from the penalties suffered by the lay criminal had a moral counterpart or complement in the abuse of sacerdotal authority, providing both the opportunity for ill-doing, and comparative immunity from its results. It is inconceivable that communities which enriched their exchequer by the exhibition of sham relics and the concoction of fraudulent miracles should have escaped a serious blunting of the moral sense; and though the tale of such miracles and relics was no doubt exaggerated, at least so far as concerned wilful deception, their general prevalence is beyond dispute. The inducement to what may euphemistically be called

lack of discipline must have been immense throughout the whole class of "exempt" monasteries—houses, that is, which were exempt from episcopal visitation, and were practically left to themselves. Comfortable doctrines on the subject of absolution and penance, however illegitimate and contrary to the true teaching as understood by the learned and the pious, made vice easy and attractive wherever authority was lax; and wherever abbots or priors were easy-going or worse, the moral tone of the entire house inevitably sank to the lowest point. These things are not questions of evidence; they are obvious inherent tendencies of the system. A house which was well ruled would be an admirable landlord, a generous dispenser of charity, a beacon of piety: ill-ruled, it became corrupt itself, and a source of corruption and superstition.

What the real condition of the average monastery or convent was at this time, the evidence does not show at all conclusively; nor is it here possible to set that evidence forth. There is no practical alternative between detailed treatment which demands volumes and summary treatment which forbids details. To select fragments as examples and base a conclusion upon them, must mean only that the historian, having formed his judgment, selects for report the details which square with it most obviously. A summary expression of opinion is all that is here possible.

We have, then, the general proposition that except at periods when a passionate wave of spiritual emotion was sweeping large numbers of enthusiasts into the life of self-denial, the inevitable tendency of the system was to laxity of discipline, producing widespread corruption of practice and abuse of privilege. Hence

there is a preliminary presumption that in the early half of the sixteenth century the general tone and standard of the religious houses was low. That many of them played deliberately upon popular credulity for their own enrichment is certain. The probability that any large proportion of the inmates were greatly occupied with industry, good works, or the pursuit of learning, is exceedingly small. In some cases it can hardly be doubted that so-called religious houses had degenerated into hotbeds of vice. On the other hand, the fate of the Observants and the Carthusians of the London Charterhouse proves that many a monk was no less ready to face martyrdom than the stoutest of Protestants; that there were houses where the monastic ideal was devoutly and nobly upheld.

Now, if the foregoing paragraphs give a correct account, it is tolerably clear that, whatever the condition of the monasteries at the time, the system was a bad one, and its destruction was desirable in the interest of religion and of the State. But the justification of the manner of the suppression depends entirely on the strength of the case against the condition of the monasteries at that particular time.

In the reign of Henry VII., Cardinal Morton had found occasion to use strong language with regard to particular religious houses and their heads. Later, when Wolsey was in power, he, too, had spoken words of warning; more, he had commenced a process of suppression, abolishing several houses, and appropriating their incomes to educational uses, as, for instance, for the foundation of Cardinal College (Christ Church) at Oxford. When Tudor ministers pronounced words of warning, they were not infrequently intended as

forcible hints that penalties might be commuted for cash, rather than as expressions of judicial opinion; and guilt which was utilised to provide funds for the minister's schemes or his master's coffers may have been rather less guilty than it was called. Moreover, for centuries the secular clergy had been jealous of the "regulars," and had nourished a genuine grievance against them—partly because of an assumption of superiority which was galling, and partly because of an absorption of ecclesiastical property which was more than galling—so that the diversion of monastic funds to other ecclesiastical purposes had not been regarded with general disfavour: the bias was towards finding the excuses for such diversion adequate.

Cromwell's scheme, however, was no development of Wolsey's. He proposed to divert the wealth of the monasteries into the royal exchequer. According to one theory of his aim, he perceived that they were dens of iniquity, instituted an inquiry which more than justified his worst anticipations, crushed the evil thing for the public good, and restored to the State the revenues which had been so grossly abused by its trustees. According to the other extreme theory, the whole business was a piece of sheer robbery utterly without excuse. The fact appears to be that there was a really strong case for the abolition of the system, and ample ground for confiscation in individual cases; but that the evidence on which wholesale spoliation was said to be justified was never made public, and had been gathered by methods which would in any case have deprived it of real weight; while the use to which the spoils were put was wholly iniquitous.

The process was simple. The king as Supreme Head delegated to Cromwell as his Vicar-General full powers to act and appoint commissioners at his pleasure; on the basis of interpreting the Supremacy as an unqualified autocracy. The Vicar-General instituted a visitation by creatures of his own—Leigh, Layton, Ap Rice, Petre, London—who bullied the monks, accepted confessions and informations from discontented inmates, treated refusals to answer the most insulting questions as admissions of guilt, and succeeded generally in collecting a vast amount of unsifted scandal. So much is absolutely certain from the letters of the commissioners. According to tradition, their reports, accompanied by written confessions, were put together; a "black book" of the damning proofs was laid before a horror-stricken Parliament; the monasteries were wiped out, to a chorus of stern applause from all right-thinking men; and the reactionists in Mary's reign seized the brief moment of their triumph to make away with the record of enormities. In fact, however, while no one will dispute that to many—perhaps to most—honest men, the monasteries in bulk were anathema, the rest of the story is unconvincing. Hugh Latimer declared that when the tale of iniquity was told in Parliament (in February 1536) it was received with a universal "Down with them," which is probably true enough, though on the other side we are told that the House took much stirring before it would pass the attendant Act. The records, however, go to show that what was laid before the House was, not the evidence which had stopped short with the king and Cromwell, but broad allegations as to which His Majesty declared

that he had found them fully proved. Such an announcement was sufficient for that Parliament. As for the "black book," no explicit account of it is known till Elizabeth was on the throne; the description of its character is suspected of being mythical; of the lost reports and confessions nothing remains but some MS. summaries known as the Comperta; and the existing data make it hardly less likely that it was the Protestants who destroyed the reports because of the inadequacy of the evidence they contained, than that the Romanists did so because of what they revealed.

The course of suppression was as follows. On 2nd October (1535) Leigh and Layton started on their visitation; precisely four months later the results of their investigations were laid before Parliament as above narrated. Admittedly their condemnation did not even approach being universal: and the shortness of the time is sufficient proof that it would be absurd to call the inquiry thorough. A bill was passed, giving all the monasteries with less than £200 a year to the king, on the general hypothesis that a small house must be a bad house; and the process of seizure, and of dispersion of the inmates, was at once commenced. Meantime, Cromwell's commissioners laid upon the religious communities new rules and regulations, grievous to be borne, with what can only be regarded as the set intention of making the monastic life insupportable.

The popular mind, however, did not share the authoritative view as to purging the land of the unclean thing, and a slight rising in Lincolnshire in the autumn was followed by a decidedly dangerous

movement in the North, known as the "Pilgrimage of Grace." This was emphatically popular in character, and was directed against the suppression of monasteries and other appropriations of ecclesiastical property. The leader, a lawyer named Aske, was cozened by fair words and promises; and the gathering dispersed. The promises were not kept, but on the first sign of renewed disturbance the sternest measures were put in force, several examples were made in towns and villages, and the late leaders were put to death. But the whole story is significant of the popular attitude in the north country towards religious innovations, and of the unscrupulous if time-honoured methods adopted in quelling opposition to the king's designs.

The pilgrimage served as a ready excuse for a fresh visitation of the North, resulting in extensive suppressions on the plea of complicity in the rising; for two years more the process was continued of worrying monasteries into voluntary self-extinction, or extracting confessions of varying veracity which warranted suppression; till finally in May 1539 an Act was passed giving all monastic property to the king.

A great deal of what was thus seized the king kept for himself; much he gave away, with an acute perception of benefits accruing. How the buildings fared for the most part, the ruins of some survive to tell. Yet a remnant was set aside for spiritual purposes. A scheme for establishing new Sees, to fill the place the "regulars" had occupied, was prepared; some new bishopries were actually founded; monastic establishments attached to some of the cathedrals,

as Canterbury and Durham, were really transformed into chapters; and some doubt was incidentally thrown on the sincerity of the reproaches hurled at these places when the chief officers, presumably the worst offenders, were themselves converted into deans and canons. A good many of the disbanded monks received pensions. But taken altogether, with insignificant exceptions, the lands and revenues which had been, in however misdirected a manner, for centuries set apart for religious ends, were not turned to fresh religious channels, not devoted to education, not even appropriated to the use of the State, but absorbed to meet the too lavish expenditure of an extravagant monarch, the financial requirements of a minister whose *clientèle* was exacting, and the greed of a rapacious nobility. Much that was evil, much that was corrupting, much that tended to foster demoralising superstitions, was wiped out when the monastic system was crushed; but the appropriation of the revenue to the satisfaction of private avarice was a robbery not so much of the Church as of the nation.

The spoliation was rounded off by the generous Parliament of 1545–46, which bestowed upon the king—whose exchequer was ever in need of replenishment—the endowments of chantries, hospitals, and other similar foundations not already involved in the dissolution of the monasteries.

Before turning to the remaining question, Henry's attitude in matters of doctrine other than that of papal authority, we must take note of two further innovations in the exercise of the Supremacy. One was the claim asserted by Leigh and Layton, as

Cromwell's commissioners, to suspend the bishops' right of visitation; the other was the invention of "tuning the pulpits," that is to say, of forbidding anyone to preach without a licence,—which was of course equivalent to ensuring that the licensee would refrain from inconvenient doctrine,—and of explicitly ordering the circulation from the pulpits of specific views as to Supremacy, papal authority, and other matters, and inflicting punishment for neglect of such orders.

Cromwell had completed the revolution. The same year, 1539, saw the coping stone placed on the edifice of absolutism by the declaration of Parliament that a Royal Proclamation had the force of an Act of Parliament. But he was not content. He had resolved on cementing an alliance with the Lutheran princes, and the resolve proved his ruin. He trapped his master, whose third wife was now dead, into a marriage with Anne of Cleves; and when it was too late to draw back, the king found he had been tricked as to the lady's charms. For such a matrimonial expert as Henry, this was too much. The marriage took place in January 1540; in June the terrible minister's head fell beneath the executioner's axe.

CHAPTER VIII

Fidei Defensor: 1529–1547

The movement which goes by the name of the Reformation, so far as we have examined it, has very little to do with what we are accustomed to regard as the great legacy of the Reformers—freedom of conscience. It has appeared, in fact, as a three-cornered contest between king, pope, and English clergy for the control of ecclesiastical legislation, revenues, and appointments. The result under Henry was that the pope was driven from the field, and the clergy submitted to the king. The submission was for the most part a palpable yielding to the stronger arm. But in the particular case of Cranmer, who accepted the change without reserve, and in such instances as his oath on consecration went spontaneously beyond what had ever been demanded, there is no fair ground for doubting that he was acting on honest conviction: on a theory of the relations of Church and State which was essentially modern, and flatly opposed to that not only of the great ecclesiastics of the past, but also to that of at least the Swiss section of the Reformers. The great prelates of the past had claimed always as the Church's right the ordering of all things spiritual, and the full control

of such temporalities as they could acquire; they had not asserted the right to control secular matters in virtue of their divine office. The Calvinistic school of Reformers, who dominated the movement in Scotland, avowedly aimed at a theocracy, demanding for the ministry a dominant voice in the counsels of the State and even of the battlefield, specifically on the ground of their office; differing from the Roman theory as claiming the functions of the Hebrew prophets rather than those of a priesthood. But Cranmer, though his doctrines changed as time passed, though in practical affairs he was weak and vacillating, was yet in this one thing entirely consistent throughout his career; until that last terrible month, when the pressing fear of imminent death drove him to the pitiful recantation which in the last hour of all he purged in martyrdom. Whatever his policy might be, its justification lay in the root-idea that the Church is subordinate to the State, that her officials are the officers of the sovereign, that her revenues are administered subject to the sovereign's control and by his favour, and that to him absolute obedience is due. The sovereign, to Cranmer, meant the king, and by implication anyone acting by royal authority; whether Parliament, or a vicar-general, or an archbishop. By royal assent, even papal authority could be restored; by the royal will it might be again cast off. Obviously, to all who believed in the inherent independence of the Church, he seemed a traitor, and his unfailing submission sheer cowardice; but if once his theory is admitted in the abstract, Cranmer's career becomes consistent, intelligible, and distinctly more logical than that of the later adherents of the theory of "Non-resistance."

But none of the three theories had anything to do with freedom of conscience. The Puritan divines were no less insistent on conformity to their standards than was Rome; and the Cranmerian theory was equally insistent on conformity to law. Cranmer's personal influence, and that of many other reformers, was exerted in the direction of latitude, but as a matter of grace, not of right; and it was a necessary corollary of the whole theory that conformity of conduct should be taken as implying conformity of opinion. But that any man had a right to form his own opinion according to the dictates of his conscience—*à fortiori*, that he had a right to preach or maintain such opinion—was a notion very far removed from any doctrine of the day, however much the temper of the English people might tend to encourage—as it has habitually done—a certain official obtuseness of hearing and vision in the guardians of the law.

Now, in point of doctrine Henry had always been careful to proclaim himself strictly orthodox. He had taken up the cudgels against Luther: he had won the title of Defender of the Faith: he had no sympathy at all with heresy. For, however ready he might be to question authority which ran counter to his personal convenience, the authority which centred in his own person was by no means to be called in question. In most minds the challenge to authority is apt to take the form of asserting *my* right of private judgment while denying *yours*—unless yours and mine happen to coincide. The force of circumstances would have made it necessary for Henry to declare for the absolute nature of legitimate authority while justifying his

revolt from Rome as a shaking off of usurped authority. So far as the Reformation is to be looked on as an appeal from authority to conscience and reason, the whole trend of Henry's mind was absolutely opposed to it. The essence of his theory was the concentration of authority in himself.

From these considerations, it followed that the Reformation under Henry was constitutional, structural, and financial; also, by the suppression of the monasteries with their charitable or educational concomitants, it was rendered social. But it was not religious.

Nevertheless in certain respects it did pave the way for a religious reformation, that is to say, for a new attitude of the mind towards religious questions.

The least important movement was towards checking the extravagance of rites which were in the view of all educated people superstitious, such as the idolatrous worship of shrines, images, or relics—worship, that is, in which the material thing tended to assume a sacred character, degenerating from a symbol into a fetish. The exposure of sham relics, the stripping of shrines, and the destruction of images, which accompanied the dissolution of the monasteries, prepared the way for a fiercer iconoclasm, a more sweeping hatred of the substitution of things visible for things of the spirit.

More important was the tendency, which did not begin to develop until after Cranmer's installation, to construct new formulæ of the faith. Although these formulæ never departed appreciably from orthodox Roman doctrine, they implied the recognition of uncertainties, and of distinctions between what is of faith and what is of human devising in the ordinances of

the Church. They admitted the existence of open questions; and each restatement of catholic doctrine carried with it a hint of possible modification.

And most important was the inclination, wavering in intensity and in the opposition rendered to it by the Old Catholics, to bring within general reach the Scriptures on which the faith was based. For it was certain that the reading of the Bible would set the minds of men upon new trains of thought; would awaken them to the differences between the scriptural foundations and the ecclesiastical superstructure; would suggest that the relative importance of various ordinances had become surprisingly distorted; and that the difficulty of reconciling sundry ecclesiastical assumptions with the words of Scripture would inevitably induce the challenging of the former.

On the other side, we have more or less spasmodic persecution of heresy, in which it does not appear that the bishops displayed any greater energy than the king's temper for the time being demanded. It must, however, be observed that prior to the "Six Articles Act" of 1539, there were two classes of heresy prosecutions: those which were strictly theological, and those in which heresy was identified at best with extravagant libels and at worst with something verging on anarchism, to which the great peasant revolt in Germany—which Luther himself vigorously condemned—had given a very ominous colour. When it is remembered that so enlightened and gentle-hearted a man as Sir Thomas More, the very reverse of a fanatic, and one of the prime movers for reform, was nevertheless active in his suppression of heresy during the years of his chancellorship, we are forced to feel

that something besides mere bigotry and bloodthirstiness were at the bottom of the persecution. It seems, in fact, as if the course of events in Germany affected More and others, much as the French Revolution affected Burke two and a half centuries later. In each case we find a man far in front of most of his contemporaries in political imagination and reasoning power, not less conspicuously honest than intellectually brilliant, a dangerously liberal thinker and writer, driven into the reaction by the extravagances of a popular outburst which found its original motive in the very principles which he had previously maintained.

It was, in fact, in few cases that the extreme rigour of the law was enforced. The holders of the new opinions for the most part fled or remained abroad, issuing from thence their diatribes against false doctrines and false pastors. The disseminators of their pamphlets or active preachers of heretical views far more often than not abjured and escaped with penance. Only those who refused to abjure, or after abjuring relapsed, suffered death; and when these belonged to the sect of Anabaptists, whose theological dogmas were associated with communistic or antinomian social theories, the victims found little sympathy even from such advanced reformers as Latimer. Among all the earlier martyrs, however, one stands pre-eminent — Frith, who died not for a dogma but for a principle. A young man, a scholar, once a pupil of Gardiner's, later imbued with Lutheran teachings, he actively disseminated those new views of the Eucharist, of Purgatory, and other prevalent doctrines, which were still held to be heretical. But when he was arraigned,

he dared to enunciate the great principle that whether his opinion were right or wrong on these matters, it could not be that a right opinion was a condition of salvation. His judges, it would seem, would fain have saved him; but while he refused to yield, they had no power to pardon; and Frith in England heads the noble roll of those who died for liberty of conscience. With him perished a loyal disciple, whose answer to questionings and persuasions was simply that as Frith thought so did he.

The return to the study of the text of Scripture as the source and fountainhead of true doctrine had been initiated by Colet, and taught as a cardinal tenet by the disciples of Erasmus at the universities. The edition of the New Testament by Erasmus had probably done more than any other work to set scholars at least clearing their minds of scholastic accretions. But at this time England was not to the fore in rendering the Bible in the vulgar tongue. Wiclif in the past had made a translation; but a score of German versions had been made before there was another in English. At length Tyndale, moved perhaps by the example of Luther, produced in 1526 a version of the New Testament, on which our later renderings have been based. His book, however, was accompanied by annotations of a violently polemical order, which caused it to be generally suppressed as heretical.

There is, however, no appearance of any serious opposition to the view that the publication of a good translation was desirable, though it may be questioned whether the ecclesiastical authorities in general viewed the project with enthusiasm. There was a

suspicion too widespread that the danger of ignorant misinterpretations was too great. Stokesley's antagonism was open and pronounced. But it was the darling scheme of Cranmer, whether he owed it to his sojourn in Germany or not; for the Bible of Luther was well fitted to inspire emulation. The suppression of Tyndale's Bible in 1530 had been accompanied by a half-promise of an authorised version; but no move was made until Cranmer had become archbishop. The first Convocation in which he presided—1534—petitioned for a trustworthy committee of translators, at the same time that they petitioned for the suppression of heretical books; and although the king did nothing, he allowed Cranmer to form a committee for the purpose, in which Gardiner took his share, while Stokesley left his untouched.

The project in that form was shelved in 1536 by the appearance of Coverdale's Bible, and an injunction from the Vicar-General that every Church was to be provided with a Bible in Latin and English. Coverdale's version, however, was in many respects unsatisfactory; but a new edition of Tyndale's—known as Matthew's — freed from some of the objectionable features, was hailed a year later with delight by Cranmer, who succeeded in getting it licensed by Cromwell; and in 1538, again, a new edition of Matthew's, revised by Coverdale, supervised by Bonner, with a preface by the archbishop and Cromwell's licence, was published under the name of the Great Bible—by reason of its actual size—and ordered in 1539 to be set up in the Churches.

Although the Great Bible failed to give general satisfaction, no other translation was issued in Henry's

reign. There was too much in it that gave an opportunity to heretical exponents. In 1542 Convocation declared that a revision was needed to prevent scandal. A committee was again formed for the purpose, when the king put a stop to it by saying that he was going to entrust the work to the universities—which he omitted to do. What the real reasons were is unknown. Gardiner had proposed to restore much of the Latin terminology, involving stereotyped ecclesiastical interpretations of which it was comparatively easy to divest the vernacular expressions: and Cranmer is often charged with having incited Henry to quash the revision in consequence. This, however, is a mere surmise, though not without plausibility, since Cranmer was admittedly in advance of all but a few of his clerical brethren in his desire to enlarge the scope within which private judgment should be allowed free play; and he may have preferred the version as it stood, to one revised in a reactionary sense.

Cranmer, however, was not content with an English Bible. It was also his desire that the people should worship in a tongue which they understood; but this could only be effected by a very gradual process. The noble language of the English Liturgy, as Cranmer shaped it, would be a sufficient monument for any man; to him in chief is due the marvellous charm of its cadences. During Henry's reign, however, no very advanced stage was reached, though a most important first step was taken. The English Litany was constructed and first authorised to be sung in parish churches in 1544.

Cranmer is fairly entitled to the chief credit for introducing both an English liturgy and the open

Bible; all the other powers being at best half-hearted, though Cromwell was entirely friendly. But in the matter of propagating new formulæ of the faith, the king himself seems to have been the moving spirit. Henry conceived himself to be no mean theologian; and when Rome was cast off, it seemed necessary to take some definite steps so as to have it thoroughly understood that the schism involved no disloyalty to catholic doctrine.

The first of these new statements of doctrine was the Ten Articles "to stablish Christian quietness," in 1536. It is not known who actually drew them up. There is in them no departure from accepted catholic doctrine, but the hand of Cranmer is apparent in the distinction laid down between ordinances having the sanction of divine authority and those having the sanction of human authority only. All alike are treated as binding, but the distinction itself implicitly conveys the suggestion that the latter are not necessarily immutable. The "necessary" articles are—acceptance of the Bible and the three Creeds as the rule of faith; the sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and the Altar; and justification. In the explanation of the Eucharist, the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ is affirmed, but neither is the word Transubstantiation used nor the mode of the Presence set forth. It is also noteworthy that the other four so-called sacraments are omitted, their sacramental character being neither denied nor affirmed. The second part deals with images, the honour due to saints, prayers to saints, rites and ceremonies, and purgatory, all of which are to be accepted but not to be abused.

The whole may be taken as an enlightened but

not an exhaustive statement of educated opinion, to which, so far as it went, the most orthodox opponents of Luther and Zwingli would have raised no objection.

The Articles were very promptly brought into use by way of demonstrating the loyalty of the king to the old faith, when the Pilgrimage of Grace made its protest against innovations.

It was apparent, however, that various controversial matters were left unsettled in the Ten Articles: they required to be supplemented. Accordingly, in the following year, a new committee was formed on the archbishop's motion, to draw up a further statement, under the title of the *Institution of a Christian Man*; which came to be generally known, when published, as the "Bishops' Book." In covering the same ground as the Ten Articles, no appreciable variation was made; but the validity of the other four sacraments (though as of somewhat less authority) was now definitely asserted.

The book did not receive the royal authority in the same way as the Articles, nor was it brought before Convocation. But permission to publish it was given, the king remarking that he had not had time to overlook it. Cranmer, and Foxe, Bishop of Hereford, are said to have done most of the work, in which, however, both conservative prelates like Stokesley and Gardiner, and those of the newer school like Latimer, Shaxton, and Barlow had their share, giving it their joint and individual approval.

The archbishop's personal opinions were no doubt somewhat in advance of those of most of his colleagues, and he was probably sanguine of inducing Henry to

move with him. But though Henry preserved an unvarying affection for his primate, and from beginning to end would never listen to a word in his disfavour, Cranmer's influence never seems to have stirred him a hair's-breadth from any course which he proposed to himself. A deputation from the Protestant League of Germany came to England in 1538, and, unfortunately for their sympathisers in this country, they succeeded in annoying the king by lack of diplomatic artifice. The result was a reactionary move. In the following year the Act of the Six Articles was introduced.

So far as the existing formularies—the Ten Articles and the *Institution*—went, there was nothing in the new Act which contravened them. But the doctrine of the Real Presence was now set forth explicitly in terms of Transubstantiation; and at the very moment when the last of the monasteries were to be extinguished, the permanence of all vows of celibacy and the general law of clerical celibacy were confirmed with stringency. On both points opposition to the German point of view was accentuated.

Now the canon law had forbidden the secular clergy to marry, but they had taken no specific vow; unions appear to have been very generally sanctioned in an informal way by custom, and of late years marriages had been common. Cranmer himself had married a German spouse, the daughter of the Lutheran Osiander, not long before his appointment to the archbishopric, and such marriages had been accounted morally valid without being technically recognised; while the continental reformers had boldly set aside the whole theory of celibacy. Thus, while it was impossible to

say that the new law contradicted any existing pronouncement, it withdrew the latitude which was in effect allowed on certain points by these pronouncements, and reaffirmed what was at any rate tending to become a dead letter; and it applied new and savage penalties to transgressors. Cranmer, though true to his principle of obedience when the Act was once passed, did honestly and openly oppose its passage with a vigour which would have cost anyone else the royal favour.

The last of the formularies of Henry's reign may be described as a modification of the Bishops' Book in accordance with the Six Articles. A committee to take it in hand was summoned, just before Cromwell's fall, but it was not till 1543 that the result of their deliberations was issued in the form of the *Erudition of a Christian Man*, otherwise known as "the King's Book." In relation to the Six Articles, it was neither advance nor retrogression; which was in some degree a victory for Cranmer, inasmuch as he was left almost alone in resisting the reactionary party who had fairly gained the upper hand. Latimer was not the only reforming bishop who had been driven from his See after the Six Articles. In effect, the *Erudition* affirmed all that had been laid down in the *Institution*, and added thereto Transubstantiation and the celibacy of the priesthood.

Cranmer was strongly urged to give way to the reactionaries, and warned of Henry's probable displeasure; but either he knew his man better than the rest did, or he had a sounder courage than he is usually credited with. In the result, the king, perceiving that there was a cabal against the archbishop, promptly

took his side, of course without withdrawing from the position he had previously taken up. The book was issued by his express authority, and received also the *imprimatur* of Convocation, which the *Institution* had lacked.

The preliminary discussions had brought out one point of very considerable interest. The method of setting to work had been that a series of questions had been drawn up, mainly by the primate, and submitted to each member of the committee for him to answer according to his own judgment. A curious diversity had prevailed on the matter of sacraments, which showed conclusively that any or every ordinance might or might not be called a sacrament very much according to fancy, until a precise definition of that term could be formulated; while, as before, the general view was that there are at any rate seven sacraments, of which three—Baptism, Penance, and the Eucharist—have a higher sanction than the rest. A stronger interest, however, of a personal kind, attaches to the discussion on Orders; for both Cranmer and Barlow declared that, in their judgment, although the episcopate had always been conferred by laying on of hands, and the ceremony of ordination under existing conditions was to be insisted on, yet this was due to the fact that in the primitive days there were no Christian princes; that Christian princes could and might appoint bishops and pastors just as they might appoint any other officers of State, without such ceremony, and without any deflection of Grace. In short, they affirmed the validity of the apostolic succession, without admitting its necessity. Cranmer's words on the subject appear to be conclusive proof of the pro-

position already laid down, that his conception of the clergy as officers of the sovereign is the keynote of his entire policy. He was not, and did not pretend to be, the guardian of the spiritual Order against the encroachments of the temporal, but the spiritual counsellor and minister of the Supreme Head. Decrees of the Supreme Head, according to this view, were taken out of the field of public disputation, comment, or opposition, although it might be good that they should be held open to discussion and examination by competent and learned persons.

At the same time with the *Erudition* there was prepared a *Rationale* of the services of the Church, rites and ceremonies, which did not receive the royal authority. It is not clear whether this had been drawn up by a second committee under Cromwell's instructions issued at the same time as those for the preparation of the *Erudition*. On the face of it, however, the *Rationale* contained much that was opposed to Cranmer's own views, and it does not seem unlikely that his influence with the king was exerted against its being sanctioned.

The year 1543 may be taken as marking the limits of the Reformation contemplated by Henry. He had asserted the supremacy of the Crown in unmistakable terms. With equal clearness he had abjured the authority of the pope. He had sanctioned the open Bible, and the introduction of the vernacular instead of Latin in the liturgy. Beyond recognising a distinction between what is of faith and what is convenient, he had allowed of no retreat from Roman doctrine. But he had abolished the institution of monasticism and laid hands on the monastic estates,

diverting them to entirely personal purposes. And so matters stood, without further modification, till death laid its hand upon him.

Henry is perhaps most commonly looked upon as a mere ruffian, save by those who regard opposition to the papacy as a certificate of character; in whose eyes he assumes heroic proportions. He was, in fact, as it would seem, curiously composite. Entirely selfish, he yet had aspirations and a conception of the kingly office which kept him from degenerating into a Charles II.; Europe could never afford to treat him as either a negligeable or a purchasable quantity. He was perfectly unscrupulous, yet constantly appealed to conscience: he was thoroughly tyrannical, yet claimed to act strictly constitutionally. Intellectually, he was a sophist; morally, he was a ruffian; but he understood men, knew his own mind, and was the absolute master of every minister he employed. Wolsey was the ablest statesman of his time, and Cromwell the most masterful; but there was no moment when the king could not have shattered either with a word. His government was remarkable neither for justice nor for far-sightedness; but it had the unfailing merit of stability. His matrimonial record speaks for itself. To the claims of loyal service and the dictates of generosity he was entirely deaf; the favourite or the trusty counsellor of one day were the victims of the next. To one man, and to one only as it would seem, he was unswervingly loyal; and that was Thomas Cranmer. It was not that he needed the archbishop; after the Submission of the Clergy and the fall of the monasteries there was no power of resistance left to the clergy. But by a

strange freak of fancy, the masterful and merciless tyrant developed a sincere, almost a tender, affection for the timid and guileless scholar, who responded with a devotion no less genuine, wholly emotional and unreasoning.

CHAPTER IX

Affairs on the Continent: 1530–1563

In an earlier chapter, the story of the Reformation movement on the Continent was brought down to the Protest of Spires in 1529—the year in which the English campaign of Reformation was ostensibly opened. It was remarked that for some two years from that time there was serious danger of such a rupture as would have involved a great religious war between the German Protestants and the Emperor. The aggression of the Turkish Power, however, compelled the postponement of hostilities; and the progress of Lutheranism was not challenged by force of arms till the death of Luther himself, which took place less than a year before that of Henry VIII.

Had a great war of religion broken out on the Continent, it is scarcely possible that the attitude of England towards the Lutherans could have been maintained. Active support to the Protestants would have entailed a more rapid approximation to their doctrinal position, an earlier recognition of the hopelessness of a reconciliation with Rome. On the other hand, opposition to them would have involved a reconsideration of the political breach with Rome;

while it is probable that Henry would have found that he could not afford to remain neutral.

The actual effect was that Henry avoided joining a Lutheran League while he carried out his own policy of emphasising the national character of the Church in England and the personal profits to the sovereign derivable from such a national institution. Cranmer dreamed perpetually of a united Protestant Church: Cromwell dreamed of an anti-papal and anti-imperial league, with England at its head. Henry dreamed of neither the one nor the other. His theological vanity prevented him from leaning towards Lutheran heresies, and his political theory did not incline him to become a member of a confederation which would certainly endeavour to control instead of being controlled by him.

Thus when the Lutherans sent over a deputation in the hope of persuading Henry and Cranmer in effect to accept the Augsburg Confession, the king treated them with very scant courtesy, and expressed his anti-Lutheran sentiments next year in the Six Articles Act. Cromwell, whose schemes had to do more with princes than with divines, offered no opposition, but was sufficiently enamoured of his political project to negotiate the Cleves marriage, entirely with a view to consolidating a Protestant alliance. The project cost him his head, and did not ultimately assist the alliance.

In fact, events on the Continent between 1530 and 1560 influenced the course of affairs in England for the most part negatively or indirectly, not positively or directly. Yet the whole process of change was one intellectual movement, and affairs in Europe cannot

be ignored without introducing erroneous ideas into the history of the isolated country.

The intricacy of the proceedings of which Charles v. is the central figure is due largely to the fact that successive popes oscillated perpetually between the desire to suppress Lutheranism and the fear of Charles becoming too powerful. Whenever the Emperor was leaving the Protestant States in peace, the pope wanted them crushed. A moment came when they seemed on the verge of being crushed, and the pope hastened to display an antagonism which caused Charles to patch up some sort of reconciliation with them again. The French kings, both Francis and his successor Henry II., were intolerant of heresy within their own dominions, but perfectly ready to make common cause with heretical enemies of the Emperor. Within the Empire there was not an effective general toleration throughout, but a geographical division into two hostile theological camps, religion going by principalities; so that the state arrived at was one, not of unity, but of hostilities perpetually imminent and perpetually deferred.

During the decade of Cromwell's predominance in England, the Protestant League was strengthened by the accession of Brandenburg and the Dukedom of Saxony. Between the Saxon Electoral house, which supported Luther from the first, and the Ducal house, there was cousinship, and there was jealousy. Duke George was one of Luther's most zealous foes. But his brother Henry, on succeeding to the dukedom, went with the other party; and Henry's son Maurice, who followed him in 1541, when he was but twenty, played a varied and generally a startling part in the events of the next twelve years.

Before this decade (1540–1550) was half through, Charles had come to the conclusion that the Schmalkaldic League required suppression. Luther, who had always exerted his influence to prevent the League from precipitating a struggle, died in February 1546; and in the summer Charles, who had kept his designs concealed, attacked the Protestants, being joined by the Protestant Maurice of Saxony, whose intent was the acquisition of the dominions of the Electoral branch. The Imperial arms were entirely successful, and the heads of the League were captured. The decisive battle took place at Mühlberg in April 1547. But the Pope Paul III., who had succeeded Clement in 1534, now severed himself from the Emperor; who in high indignation made a temporary settlement of German religious affairs after a fashion of his own, establishing a curious and wholly unsatisfactory *modus vivendi* by the measure known as the Augsburg Interim (1548). This in effect surrendered the orthodox position while purporting to maintain it; with the natural result of satisfying neither party.

The proceedings narrated above bore on the political position of the Protestants of the Empire, and show how it was that the spread of Lutheran teaching and the elaboration of Protestant doctrine continued without practical check. Two great factors in the later stages of the Reformation were being developed during these years—the Jesuit Society and the Calvinist School at Geneva—to which we shall revert. A third series of events claims immediate attention, being partly political and partly religious in character—namely, the three-handed game of battledore and shuttlecock, played with the demand for a General

Council of the Church, between the popes, the Lutherans, and the Emperor.

Even before the issuing of the Bull which Luther burned, the great leader of the Reformation had appealed to a General Council as the only authoritative court which could decide the questions at issue. Henry VIII. and Cranmer some years later made the same appeal to a General Council as having higher authority than a pope, with the approval of all the doctors of the Church. At the Diet of 1530 the Emperor expressed himself in favour of a General Council to decide all the questions in dispute. On the other hand, to Pope Clement the proposal was objectionable on the personal ground that it weakened his own authority. To have a papal judgment overridden by a Council might have most embarrassing results. From Luther's point of view the appeal was in some degree a negation of any ultimate authority, since part of his doctrine had already been condemned by the Council of Constance; and if one Council could revoke the decisions of another, finality vanished. Charles, whose views were controlled by political rather than religious ideas, wished to end the division of the German States, and regarded a Council as the only means by which a working agreement could be achieved.

Clement's successor, Paul III., differed from him in one vital particular, being not unwilling to have a Council, provided that he could rely on its maintaining his authority; but then, *mutatis mutandis*, the Imperial view might have been expressed in similar terms.

Now, while Clement lived, it is unnecessary to go

beyond the primary fact that he was determined to evade a Council at any price, though he was equally compelled to declare that he was most anxious to hold one. But when Paul III. followed him on the papal throne, the situation was changed. Each of the three principal parties was anxious for a Council on its own terms. Each was equally determined to resist—or repudiate—a council held on any other terms than their own. Consequently all three declared that a Council was the one thing they desired, but that one or both of the other parties showed plainly that they would not allow it to be of any avail. In addition, a formal peace between the princes of Christendom was a necessity, and the pope's schemes for Councils in 1537 and 1538 were both upset by war between Charles and Francis.

There was a time when it appeared that a basis might be arrived at which all three would accept, and which the French king also would not repudiate. The fundamental difference between Lutherans and pope was that the former required that certain questions should be treated as open which in the papal view were already decided. A conference was actually brought about at Ratisbon from which great things were hoped by the sanguine. The pope's selection of cardinals after his election had marked a conciliatory tendency on his part: the appointment now of Contarini as legate seemed to ratify that promise. On the great question of justification by faith, the views of Contarini, Pole, and some others were hardly distinguishable from those of the Lutherans. For the German reformers, the chief representative was the learned and conciliatory

Melanchthon. Luther distrusted the whole affair, and refused to attend; but the absence of so polemical a leader seemed rather favourable to peace than otherwise. Under the tactful management of Contarini, all seemed to go wondrous well; a real basis of agreement seemed to be emerging. But the moderates who were present could not control the partisans who were absent. The pope would not confirm the concessions of Contarini; Luther would not swallow the sops. The fair hopes melted. Incidentally it was observed that Francis had deliberately sought to prevent the impending reconciliation.

This conference of Ratisbon (1541) was the last of a series of similar attempts to arrive at some understanding, due to the Emperor's initiative. He can hardly have hoped thereby to render a Council unnecessary; but while they were in progress, any attempt to call one was necessarily deferred.

The failure forced Charles back on either a Council or a national synod. The pope, recognising and dreading the latter alternative, became urgent that a Council should be held; and the determination issued in the convocation of the Council of Trent. Although this took place in 1542, the Council was not formally opened till December 1545.

The conditions under which it was called definitely mark off the established fact that Western Christendom was already divided with a permanent division into Protestant and Roman Catholic. Those conditions implied in themselves the validity of the papal authority and the prejudgment condemning Protestant opinions. Protestants who still asserted themselves to be members of the Catholic Church,

and denied that their views were heretical, could not accept it as œcumenical. They could not attend it, nor acknowledge its decisions. It was explicitly a council of a party in the Church which claimed for itself the monopoly of catholicity, and by its constitution it affirmed the heretical character of doctrines which the excluded ones declared to be catholic. Anglicans, Lutherans, and Calvinists were alike precluded in effect from any share in it.

In brief, then, the Council of Trent was the corporate effort of the Roman Catholic body to effect a reformation within its own boundaries: a reformation in which a leading part was to be played by two very important bodies: the Oratorians, founded later by St. Philip Neri, and the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits, already founded by the Spaniard Inigo Lopez de Recalde, commonly called Ignatius Loyola.

The English Reformation is not practically concerned with the Oratorians; nor did the Jesuits influence it before the reign of Elizabeth. But their great and protracted campaign against that monarch vitally affected the national sentiment in her reign, intensifying and crystallising the anti-Roman feeling which the Marian persecution had already aroused. It will therefore not be out of place to give some attention to those early days of the Order that were contemporaneous with the main events with which we have to deal.

Unlike most important movements, the one which took form in the Society of Jesus was not, as the phrase goes, "in the air"; it was conceived in the brain of a single man, Ignatius Loyola. Reform was in the air; but the method adopted was Loyola's

own creation. A young knight full of martial ardour, he was struck down in battle; when he rose from his sickbed, it was with a resolution to exchange earthly for heavenly warfare. There had been soldiers of the Cross before, but they had fought with the arm of flesh. The new idea was, to introduce military organisation into the warfare of the spirit. The utter obedience of the soldier to his superior officers is the principle that makes armies invincible; it was the beginning and the middle and the end of the association that Loyola conceived. Obedience to the right rule of life is enjoined upon all men; obedience to the rules of an order is enjoined upon members of the order; not only obedience to these, but submission absolute, unquestioning, unhesitating to every injunction from a superior officer was to be the fundamental law of the society.

Even in Loyola's own mind the idea did not take immediate and final shape. For years he gave himself up to a personal training which should fit him for the end he had in view; prayer and fasting, study and travel, the subjugation of the flesh, the education of the brain, the purification of the spirit, to these he devoted himself. Towards 1530 he met, and so to speak absorbed, the kindred spirit, François Xavier; in 1534 they and five others at Montmartre solemnly formed themselves into a company, the nucleus of one of the mightiest organisations for good or for evil that the world has known. They preached, they taught, they inspired, they became a power: in those early days, a power with a single eye to the service, as they understood it, of the Saviour. Mystics and enthusiasts, endowed with every advantage of birth

and breeding, of education and of ability, they gathered followers and disciples; till in 1543 the Order was recognised and confirmed by Paul III., a year after the revival of the Inquisition in Rome.

Education, indeed, was a primary object with not a few of the Reformers of all schools; with none was it carried to such a pitch as with the Jesuits. They established colleges everywhere: they trained their pupils' brains up to their highest capacity: they instilled also an absolute discipline; and a machine was thereby constructed which answered to the will of the engineer with an unparalleled perfection. The devotion of the members of the organisation was unfailing. But the system carried with it, as of its essence, without which it could not exist, one quality fatal from the ethical point of view; it killed the individual's sense of personal moral responsibility when it converted him into an exquisitely finished cog in a consummately constructed machine. The moral law was absorbed in obedience. The Jesuit schools sent forth many heroes and many martyrs; but wherever their influence obtained it inevitably and deliberately strangled freedom of conscience, which is the condition of moral responsibility and of robust spiritual life.

It was in the second year after the vow at Montmartre that a new portent appeared in the theological firmament, when Calvin published his *Institutes*. In the way of coincidences and contrasts, it is curious to note that Loyola, who was to exercise a supreme influence on the Roman Catholic world, was born in the birth-year of Henry VIII.; while Calvin, who was to exercise in his turn a supreme influence on the

Protestant world, was born in the year of his accession to the throne.

A native of Picardy, he was driven out of France by the persecution which Francis carried out in his own dominions even while he was intriguing with the Protestant princes. At the age of twenty-seven he issued the work which shaped with a remorseless logic the conclusions implicit in the leading doctrines of the Swiss reformers. No whit less precise and rigid in its dogmatism than was the Roman Catholic religion after it emerged from the Council of Trent; far more hostile to catholicism than was Luther or even Zwingli; conceiving of the world as having been created by the Almighty in order to the salvation of the few elect and the damnation of the vast majority of His creatures; demanding for the ministry the right and the duty to punish with the sternest penalties not merely offences against social order but deflections from the moral and disciplinary standard laid down; claiming assured salvation for the elect, but neither asking nor granting mercy for the "reprobate": the stark and grim religion of Calvin laid its hand upon the Protestant Reformation. The Huguenots of France, the Netherlanders, the Scots, the English, chiefly of the eastern counties, who later gave to America her Pilgrim Fathers, fell under its dominion. These, too, have their glorious muster-roll of heroes and martyrs; the merciless rigour of their theory failing to crush entirely a certain illogical human tenderness of heart which redeemed Puritanism in its own despite.

Calvin at first proved too harsh even for the Switzers, and he was banished from Geneva, but his

personality was far too vigorous for repression. Three years later—in 1541—he was recalled and established as a kind of religious dictator in a nominal commonwealth.

So, within a very few months of Henry's death, the stage reached by the Reformation on the Continent may be thus summarised.

The German *modus vivendi*, which had lasted till Luther's death, was disturbed by the Schmalkaldic war; but since the termination of that war synchronised with a quarrel between Emperor and pope, and the transference of the Council from the Imperial Trent to the Italian Bologna, the defeat of the Lutherans was not pressed to extremities.

In the meantime, however, such prospects as there ever had been of a reconciliation between the Protestants and the Holy See had practically vanished. The attempt to find common ground had failed with the Diet of Ratisbon, and the Roman Church had started on a process of internal reform (known as the counter-reformation), officially opened with the opening of the Council of Trent in December 1545, but actually initiated by the formation of the Jesuit Order. Among the Protestants, on the other hand, the differences of the Lutherans and the Zwinglians had crystallised into the more rigid division of Lutherans and Calvinists, while the Reformers in England remained separate from both, though hitherto with some leanings towards a Lutheran compromise. From this time, however, the foreign influences in England became less Lutheran than Calvinistic, or Zwinglian at the least.

The Augsburg Interim, which took effect the year

after Henry's death, was not, as we have observed, satisfactory to the Protestants. Some of them found it advisable to withdraw to the shelter of England, which under a new régime had become more congenial. In Germany the Interim was enforced with varying rigour, Maurice of Saxony ostensibly siding with the Emperor. But that daring and brilliant prince had other schemes in view. He was approaching his thirtieth year, and it may be that he was developing a more soberly patriotic spirit with the years. At any rate he was making up his mind to stand for German unity, and deliverance from the Spanish character of Charles's rule; and to that end he designed to place himself at the head of the Protestants, being himself a professed Lutheran in spite of his attack on the Schmalkaldic League.

Charles seems to have had no suspicion of dangers ahead. At the end of 1549 Paul III. died; he was succeeded by Julius III., who favoured the Emperor. Julius at once notified that the Council was to renew its sessions at Trent. Charles was well pleased, and in return it was announced at the Imperial Diet that the decisions of the Council would be enforced. The meaning of that could only be that the toleration of Lutheranism was to end. But Charles had reckoned without his host; the unexpected Maurice made a sudden swoop, scattered his troops, all but captured his person, incidentally stopped the proceedings of the council, and drove the Emperor to make the peace of Passau, which again secured the Protestants their liberties.

The next year saw the death of Maurice, and also of Edward VI. By its close, negotiations had been opened

for the union of the new Queen Mary to the Emperor's son Philip; in the following summer (1554) the marriage was celebrated. A few months later, England was formally reconciled to Rome.

In February 1555 the Imperial Diet met at Augsburg, and, under the presidency of the Emperor's brother Ferdinand, ratified the toleration of Passau by the peace of Augsburg. The settlement then arrived at prevailed for half a century, and such hopes as Charles may have hitherto maintained of passing on the Imperial crown to Philip disappeared. It was clear that Germany would not endure a Spanish domination.

The star of Charles was not in the ascendant. Julius was succeeded in this same year by the Cardinal Caraffa (Paul IV.), a fiery and austere zealot, whose personal animosity to the Hapsburgs was increased by the Augsburg success of the Protestants. In February of the following year Charles resigned the crown of Spain to Philip, retired from active political life, and died in the year which saw Elizabeth ascend the English throne.

The final stage of the Council of Trent was not reached till 1563, when yet another pope was reigning, who had followed Paul IV. in 1559. Whereby there came about that union of Spain, Rome, and the Jesuits which forced England to consolidate herself once more into the Power which was to grapple with Spain in the new world, and to shatter the Invincible Armada.

CHAPTER X

Josiah: 1547–1549

Although Henry to the last refused to make any distinct movement in the direction of doctrinal reformation, the men who stood highest in his favour in the latter days were known to be in favour of the new ideas. The dying king was permitted to lay down the rule for succession according to his own choice; and the orders he left behind him provided for a Council of Regency to conduct the affairs of the country during the minority of Edward, son of Jane Seymour, who succeeded to the throne. In default of issue he was to be followed by Mary and then by Elizabeth; though the marriages with their respective mothers had been pronounced void. In the meantime it was evidently contemplated that Cranmer should hold a chief place in the council, which was intended to be a sort of round table. The leading spirits in it, however, had no sort of intention of being controlled by the dead hand of which they had hitherto stood in such awe. They are, indeed, even suspected of having falsified the list of the councillors which was actually produced.

A very remarkable feature therein was the exclusion of Gardiner, who was without question the

second ecclesiastic in the country. The one certain fact is that there was within that council a cabal who had already formed their plans for capturing the control. There may or may not have been trickery even in its formation; there can be no doubt at all that it began operations by a reconstruction which the dead monarch had not contemplated. The Earl of Hertford, uncle of the boy-king Edward, was forthwith made Protector of the realm, and Duke of Somerset. His brother, the Lord High Admiral, became Lord Seymour of Sudeley, and made haste to marry the consort who had succeeded in surviving Henry. Lord Lisle became Earl of Warwick, and the unscrupulous Rich took Wriothesly's place as chancellor. The cabal had captured the machinery of government, and a very curious group they formed.

The cleverest of them was probably Paget, and the vilest was Rich; but the chief was the Lord Protector. For every one of them the consideration of primary importance was personal aggrandisement; all had profited largely by the spoliation of the recent reign. How far any of them possessed religious convictions may be doubted, but their professed opinions were for the most part on the side of the new theories. Somerset himself, though greedy and selfish and overflowing with vanity, appears not to have been entirely lacking in sincerity; and while incapable of conducting a vigorous administration—and consequently alternating between habitual weakness and occasional violence—he had a curious *penchant* for passing as a friend of the people, and a curious success in achieving popularity with the crowd.

It was a business of the first importance to

thoroughly fetter the one man on the other side whose political ability was of a commanding order—Bishop Gardiner. Tunstall of Durham was able, but no fighter; Bonner was truculent, but without influence; Gardiner was the last of the old school of political ecclesiastics of which Wolsey had been the consummation. But he had no chance against the forces arrayed to overthrow him. He was indeed permitted to take the principal part in the obsequies of Henry, which were celebrated with all the pomp and all the ceremonial of the Old Church; but it was Cranmer who officiated at the coronation of the young king; and in doing so he struck the note of warning, in a discourse which likened Edward to the boy-king Josiah, who destroyed images and otherwise purified the religion of the kingdom of Judah—with obvious inferences as to what the new Josiah was to be expected to do.

Gardiner felt that he must either take up the challenge or follow the archbishop's lead. The time for sombre acquiescence was past, and he declared against any innovations or changes until the boy-monarch should be of age. At the first outset it appears that Cranmer would have been willing to take the same line; but he was always susceptible to the influence of his surroundings, and it did not take many days to persuade him that the *de facto* Government had the same authority as a full-grown king—more especially as his personal inclination had long been towards a very marked advance in the direction of at least liturgical and ceremonial reform; and as more than once, while Henry was yet living, he had been disappointed in his pet project of formulating a body of doctrine in

conjunction with the leading spirits of German Protestantism.

In Henry's reign the Reformation had been sufficiently vigorous, but the field in which the Defender of the Faith had allowed it scope was limited. He had dealt with the pope, the clergy, and the temporalities; the phase of reformation which commenced after his death was a revision of religious doctrine and practice.

The central subject of controversy between Orthodox Catholicism and the various schools of reformers was indubitably the theory of the Mass, Communion, or Lord's Supper: frequently referred to as the Sacrament of the Altar. Nor has there ever been a subject on which it is less possible to discover the actual views held by half the controversialists.

At one end was the doctrine vulgarly propounded and understood as orthodox: that the act of consecration by the priest changed the material particles of bread into material particles of flesh, and the material particles of wine into material particles of blood, while by an illusion to the eye, the touch, and the taste, no change was apparent.

This doctrine had its esoteric or scholastic rendering, intelligible to the learned, but wholly meaningless to the unlearned. The philosophers had discovered a distinction between the Thing and its Attributes; between Substance and Accidents; between the Real and the Material; between the Noumenal and the Phenomenal. In each case it was the second term which applied to what is subject to the laws of matter. Size, colour, form are Accidents: the Substance is without magnitude. The Material is extended in space, cannot be in two places

at once, is hard, soft, light, heavy, and so on; the Real has nothing to do with space except so far as it is associated with matter. One substance then *may* be associated with matter in more than one place, and with accidents usually associated with a different substance. Therefore the substance of bread and wine may be changed into the substance of flesh and blood without any change in the material or attributes, the phenomenal aspect. This was the nature of the change effected by the act of consecration. Such was the scholastic doctrine of Transubstantiation, intelligible only to the trained metaphysician.

At the opposite extreme stood the Zwinglian doctrine, that Christ's words, "This is My Body," "This is My Blood," were entirely metaphorical; that no change whatever took place; that the sacrament was a purely commemorative ordinance.

The Calvinistic position was not greatly removed from this, but went so far further as to affirm that in the act of participation the communicant metaphorically received Christ into his heart; did actually receive a gift of Grace. This was the reward of participating in the commemorative ceremony, and was in no way dependent on the act of consecration.

Between these extremes it is possible to formulate a series of hypotheses, each of which professes to be the statement of a doctrine of the Real Presence. One at least is generally intelligible: that just as Jehovah, present throughout the world, might yet be specially localised on Sinai, in the Burning Bush, in the Holy of Holies, so Christ reigning in heaven might yet be present in the sacred elements, in a special sense. Another is the Lutheran doctrine of Consubstantiation,

declared by so subtle an intellect as that of the late Canon Aubrey Moore to be unintelligible, which affirms the simultaneous presence of the substance (whether in the literal or the scholastic sense) of Christ's Body and Blood with the substance of bread and wine. Again, it is propounded that the Glorified Body is not a Natural Body, but exempt from the laws of matter; though here it seems to be forgotten that the sacrament was instituted before the Resurrection. Or again, it seems to be intended that the Presence is purely spiritual, although the literal correctness of the terms "Body and Blood" is insisted on while everything connoted by those terms is rejected: the difficulty involved being defended on the unanswerable plea that it is a "mystery." In every one of these interpretations it is of course obviously possible to maintain that the Presence is conditional on the faith of the participant, or is involved by the act of consecration, or is independent of the act of consecration, or is continuous after that act, or is confined to the moment of participation.

Amid such a maze of hypotheses it is scarcely surprising that considerable doubt prevails as to the precise hypothesis favoured at any given time—in a period when opinions were in a state of general flux—by Cranmer, Ridley, and others who were prominent in the controversy of the time.

In the regions of abstract discussion, Justification by Faith was a subject hardly less prominent, but involving far less bitterness. For, while Luther laid it down as a cardinal tenet, there were not a few among the avowed Romanists who were ready to accept it—such as Cardinals Pole and Contarini. If

it be admitted that charity is the necessary fruit of faith, the question whether justification is to be attributed to the faith alone, or to faith and charity together, becomes a purely academic one. It is only from the amazing antinomian theory that faith absolves from charity that danger can be apprehended.

Other subjects of controversy, however, were of a much more practical character. The abuse, under the Romish system, of the doctrines of penance and purgatory had developed the idea that sin could be weighed in a balance against penalties and purged by them, independently of repentance. The real doctrine underlying both ideas is, that sin is purged by repentance, but that justice demands also the penalty, which again the true penitent knows to be deserved. The travesty of this doctrine, involved in the idea that penalties could be bought off, led by no means logically to a rejection of the whole theory of purgatory—which total rejection, however, was never affirmed by the English formularies. The moral effect of the extreme attitude, practically involving a belief that the soul passes straight from the body to eternal bliss or everlasting torment, was by no means inconsiderable.

The theory of a celibate clergy, again, was of practical moment, because it not only affected their individual lives, but marked off the whole ecclesiastical body as separate from other men, and living under a different law. The abolition of the rule was a long step towards accepting a view of the sacerdotal office at least greatly modified from that heretofore prevalent.

None of these questions, however, appealed to the popular mind so strongly as the contests over images

and ceremonies, the customs and observances which in the eyes of the new school either were positively idolatrous or tended to idolatry—to the worship of the work of men's hands. This struggle, however, did to some extent involve the most abstract of all the subjects of contention, the theory of the Presence in the Sacrament, on account of the question whether the consecrated elements had by the act of consecration been rendered an object of worship.

Iconoclasm, celibacy, ceremonial were all matters that could be dealt with after a comparatively summary manner; on the more abstract points of doctrine, a somewhat more deliberate method was necessary. The new government could hardly execute a right-about-face and forthwith deny formally the positions which the most advanced of the bishops had been content to accept up to Henry's death. But the penal statutes could be repealed, the Henrician professions could be treated as open, and pulpits and professorial chairs could be gradually packed with upholders of the new views, so as to pave the way for their formal adoption or admission within the scope of the formularies, while the literature on the same side could be systematically encouraged. As yet the question of the form of Church government, which at a later date issued in Dissent, had not acquired grave importance.

The campaign of Reformation, suspended by the late king when his own immediate ends had been achieved, may be said to have opened with the archbishop's coronation discourse, which was a virtual declaration of war against images. This was followed up by obtaining the royal authority for the Book of Homilies, and the *Paraphrase* of Erasmus in English.

Neither Parliament nor Convocation had a voice in these matters. Throughout the year 1547 the Protector's Government relied on that Act of the past reign which gave the force of law to the Royal Proclamations.

The Book of Homilies, referred to as the "First Book of Homilies" in the Thirty-Nine Articles of a later date, had been compiled by Cranmer during Henry's lifetime, and he had made abortive attempts to procure their sanction from king and Convocation: no doubt in the hope that they would in effect take the place of the King's Book as an exposition of orthodox doctrine. On the positive side they did not greatly depart from the lines laid down in that volume; yet by implication, and by omissions, they did constitute a material departure, inasmuch as they said little of any of the sacraments, and nothing at all of the Sacrament of the Altar. By the process of limiting the parochial clergy to reading the homilies instead of preaching sermons, these were now in effect restrained from instructing their flocks in these high mysteries, and the clear impression was conveyed that the Church deliberately abstained from authoritative pronouncement with regard to them.

The *Paraphrase* of Erasmus was at once more insidious and more actively propagandist. The great scholar's Paraphrase of the New Testament was constructed from the point of view of a reformer, and suggested endless parallelisms between the Jewish priesthood and the clergy, the antagonism of Christ's teaching to ecclesiastical injunctions, the opposition between the spirit and the letter.

A visitation was ordered and a Commission ap-

pointed for the purpose, on the analogy of Cromwell's proceedings. It was the business of this Commission to take order for the further destruction of "abused" images—images, that is, which tended to encourage superstition and to attract popular worship to themselves — for distributing the *Paraphrase*, and for enforcing the reading of the homilies. The interpretation of what brought images under the "abused" category was so extremely liberal as to cover painted windows illustrating miracles, and led generally to much breaking of glass, whitewashing of frescoes, and demolishment of carving generally. The injunctions which the Commissioners enforced are known as the Injunctions of Edward VI. In part they were virtually a repetition of those issued by Cromwell, the general purpose of the visitation being to see that the clergy were duly performing their duties; but besides the additions above named, it was enjoined in them that the lessons should be read in English, that the litany in English should be used, and that processions should cease.

The visitation did not commence till the summer was well advanced. Gardiner had been prompt enough in declaring his position. Cranmer tried to win his adherence to the Book of Homilies, but was vigorously rebuffed, and distinctly had the worst of the encounter. Gardiner took his stand on the King's Book and the adequacy of the Henrician reformation, wanting to know what Cranmer meant by seeking to uproot that accepted and authoritative exposition. The archbishop could only reply that Henry had been seduced into the late settlement; a proposition scarcely consistent with the attitude he had himself main-

tained, as Gardiner promptly pointed out, not without sarcasm. No steps disturbing that settlement could, in the Bishop of Winchester's opinion, be taken, except by the personal authority of Henry's successor; nor could Edward properly exercise that authority while still a minor. And when it came to the visitation, he remarked with considerable force that it was a suspension of and contrary to the law; and that it was dangerous to urge that a royal proclamation could override the law, as he had himself seen the clergy brought under Præmunire, and heads rolling on the scaffold, for obeying a royal order which was against the law. The example of resistance was followed by Bonner, Bishop of London, and both prelates were removed to confinement in the Fleet, muzzled but not entirely silenced.

In November, both Convocation and Parliament met; and the Six Articles and Treasons Acts were repealed, with the general approbation of clergy and people. Both assemblies demanded the restoration of the Communion in both kinds, and Convocation asked for, but did not till a year later obtain, relief from the laws enjoining clerical celibacy. Parliament, on the other hand, confirmed the last act of spoliation in Henry's reign by bestowing the surviving chantries on the king; a measure less outrageously abused than others of a like kind, since, in part at least, the funds were utilised for the endowment of schools. The credit which Edward has gained for his liberality in the cause of education is considerably exaggerated when the resources of his generosity are brought to mind; still, some praise is doubtless due, since the funds were not merely appropriated to the satisfaction of private greed.

Convocation on its own part endeavoured to recover some of the ground lost by the "Submission of the Clergy." They petitioned that the spectral Commission of thirty-two, which was to have examined the canons of the Church, might be materialised, and also that the clergy themselves should sit in Parliament, or that at least their assent should be necessary to statutes and ordinances dealing with religion. The attempt was a complete failure, but remains on record as a formal protest against their forcible deprivation of what they held to be constitutional rights.

During the next year, 1548, the war against images was carried a stage further, the distinction of "abused" images being abolished and all alike being condemned; and orders were issued suppressing various minor practices which were falling into a comparatively general condemnation as superstitions, such as creeping to the Cross. The iconoclastic fervour of the reformers, however popular it may have been locally in places where foreign refugees and English disciples of German or Swiss teachers congregated, was by no means to the mind of the rural population: sundry riots took place, and in Cornwall there was something of a rising. The important features of the year's movement, however, were the appointment of the Windsor Commission, primarily to compose an Order of Communion in English, the preparation of the First Prayer-Book of Edward VI., and the stringent measures taken for the regulation, almost the suppression, of preaching.

The practice of licensing preachers was an old one, originally instituted for the relief of the parochial clergy. The hypothesis that a curate is *ex officio*

capable of composing and delivering an unlimited number of discourses to the edification of his parishioners, was considered doubtful; and while bishops had licence to preach in any diocese, and parish priests to preach in their own parishes, licences were issued to enable members of the various orders to occupy parish pulpits. Henry, however, had found it convenient, when special doctrines required to be emphasised, to suspend the normal licences, and restrict the right of preaching to a comparatively select number of licensees; the rest of the clergy being only allowed to deliver authorised discourses or homilies. Now, however, the power of issuing licences was restricted to the king, the protector, and the primate; and an extremely rigorous selection being exercised, it is obvious that the whole power of pulpit rhetoric was necessarily made to tell in favour of the advanced party. But even so, it was found that the selection was inadequate; that preachers were too violently controversial; and at last preaching was altogether suspended, pending the publication of the new Prayer-Book, which it was hoped would secure something like uniformity. The plain fact, no doubt, was that men who could be at all relied upon to refrain from inflammatory utterances were hardly to be found.

The new Order of Communion was issued shortly before Easter. The doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar had not as yet been admitted into the field of open controversy; the ecclesiastical conservatives were not unrepresented on the Commission, though neither Gardiner nor Tunstall were among their number; and the innovations, though important, did not involve grave points of doctrine. Although the greater part

of the service was in English, there were still portions for which Latin was retained; and the administration of the Communion in both kinds had already received the definite support of the clergy.

From this revision of the Order of Communion the Commission proceeded to the preparation of a Prayer-Book which should take the place of the varying breviaries and "Uses" prevailing in different dioceses, —a scheme for which there was ample precedent, and which was not by any means revolutionary. Cardinal Quignon had prepared a revised Roman breviary, which however had not met with sufficient approval at Rome to receive papal authority, and the Elector-Archbishop of Cologne had prepared a liturgy with the assistance of Luther, both of which the Commission had before them; while the "Use of Sarum" was the particular form adopted as the general basis for the new book. Cranmer, however, had devoted an infinity of study to existing liturgies, Eastern as well as Western, and the accumulated stores of his learning were frequently utilised in amending, amplifying, and improving the common material upon which his less erudite colleagues were employed. The idea of simplification and uniformity was an old one; such a reform belonging to that large category of things which, by general consent, ought to be done, but continue under official consideration from generation to generation.

The scheme, then, was not revolutionary, nor could that term be applied to the compilation itself. Its primary characteristic was the full and final substitution of the vernacular for Latin throughout. It maintained the Communion in both kinds, and it laid down that auricular confession was not actually necessary.

Otherwise it was in effect only by omission that practices prevalent in the past reign were departed from; and it remains to this day a disputed point whether omission implied prohibition in respect of ceremonial observances. Forms at the same time were so far modified as not to involve explicitly the doctrine of Transubstantiation. But, on the whole, it may be said that it was possible to reconcile acceptance of the King's Book with acceptance of the Prayer-Book, and also to reconcile acceptance of the latter with a very considerable deviation from the former. For the noble language of the English rendering which has made the Prayer-Book a masterpiece of literature, Cranmer himself is known to be mainly responsible; and for this, at least, he is entitled to ungrudging praise.

The evidence, on the whole, does not show that the book received the *imprimatur* of Convocation; but it was authorised by Parliament in January 1549. Amongst the most important measures of that session was the passing of the first Act of Uniformity enjoining the universal use of the Prayer-Book on the clergy under severe penalties. On the precise interpretation of the legal effects of this Act depend largely the questions of legitimate ceremonial observances which have recently agitated so severely the minds of Churchmen—and others.

In the same session was passed an Act legalising the marriage of clergy.

Up to this point, although the Reformation had arrived at an aggressive phase in respect of images and ceremonies, it had conceded nothing to the distinctively Swiss school. The English reformers cannot

be said to have followed Luther, but the lines of the movement were generally in much the same direction as his. Hitherto, however, Cranmer's personal longing to act in direct conjunction with German Protestantism had been continuously balked; and a great influx of foreigners which set in during 1548, supported by the rising influence of English disciples of the religious dictator of Geneva, rendered the remaining years of Edward's reign at once more violent, more revolutionary, and theologically more Calvinistic.

CHAPTER XI

The Puritan Eddy: 1549–1553

The conditions under which the doctrines and practices of a reformed Church made their way in England were very materially affected by the anarchy into which civil government had fallen. In Henry's days there had been no absence of method, no uncertainty about the ends in view, and, whatever the iniquities of the king or his ministers, the reformation movement was systematic. But in Edward's reign there was never either a strong head or a strong hand in control. A Government which remains rigidly inert till the effective moment arrives and then seizes its opportunity is bound to accomplish a good deal; but one which only moves spasmodically is tolerably certain to effect such good as it does accomplish in the worst possible way. The reign of Elizabeth was a triumph of opportunism —of a consummate perception of exactly how far it was safe to go at a given time, the outcome of a penetrating measurement of the forces at work. But in Edward's day, Cecil, the arch-opportunist, was only biding his time—applying the principles of opportunism to his personal career, achieving such distinction as might help him in the future without a too dangerous present eminence; while the political chiefs had no definite

policy except self-aggrandisement. The economic revolution produced by the fall of the monasteries caused much suffering among the poorer classes; the funds which had formerly in great part been expended in the relief of distress were diverted into the pockets of the wealthy; and a generation of particularly grasping landlords robbed the agricultural population with no less alacrity than they had displayed in absorbing the spoils of the Church. There was none to restrain the spoilers, for it was they themselves who sat in the high places.

Now the Government, associated by its very composition with the policy of plunder, was by consequence necessarily anti-clerical. Hence a popular inference associated Reformers as such with the policy of plunder. In many respects the association was grotesquely misplaced. But it was a notable result of the prevalence of this idea that, whereas in the past revolts of the peasantry had been anti-clerical, and the Lollards had been suppressed more for their economic than for their ecclesiastical heresies; and whereas in Germany the great peasant revolt was associated with anabaptism; in Edward's reign the important and bloody rising in the West was anti-Protestant. In the eastern counties, where Protestant opinions were in advance of Government, Ket's rising was not religious in its object, but social; the ideas were dissociated; there the Puritan movement had begun with the people. In the West, Puritan ideas had not penetrated to the people when the Government imposed its ecclesiastical reforms.

Thus it was that when the new Prayer-Book was forced upon the west country, it was fiercely resisted;

the people cried out against its innovations. The complaint that its modified ceremonial was "like a Christmas play" is not easy of interpretation; perhaps it meant that what was felt to be solemn and magnificent, in association with rites that were mysterious and awe-inspiring when veiled in a foreign language, became paltry and tawdry as the adjunct of a service in the vernacular. At any rate, the men of Devon and Cornwall declared themselves with no uncertain voice to be opposed to all innovations; they even called for the revival of the Six Articles: but they also very significantly demanded the restoration to the Church of at least one-half of the abbey and chantry lands howsoever and by whomsoever acquired. The rising was extremely serious, the insurgents being able even to lay siege to Exeter; and it was put down with no little difficulty by the employment of large bodies of mercenaries. The archbishop's reply to the petition of the insurgents shows somewhat unusual marks of temper on his part. The notable feature of the rising, however, is that in this one case religion was put in the forefront as the cause. Disturbances occurred in many other parts of the country, but they in nearly every case were openly social in their origin, and there is considerable ground for supposing that opposition to the religious innovations would never have amounted to a sufficiently exciting cause for revolt, except when they were regarded as signs of the generally oppressive policy of the new nobility.

Thus in the eastern counties, Robert Ket gathered round him in the neighbourhood of Norwich a force of 16,000 men, who demanded the redress of grievances; but the English service was read twice daily in

his camp. It has become so much the fashion of late to find it pretty broadly hinted that the English Reformation was a purely political affair—in a sort of reaction against the school which was wont to describe it as the work of a nation enthusiastically Protestant—that it is worth while dwelling a little on points which emphasise the widespread existence of strong religious feeling. It need not be denied that until they were forced to take sides, the people generally did not very greatly care about the points in dispute between the old and new schools; but unless the religious sentiment had been active in the minds of the humbler classes, neither the religious purpose of the Western rising nor the religious tone of Ket's would have been possible.

Vacillation, violence, and bad faith characterised the suppression of both risings, as might have been expected from such a Government. Already the Lord Protector's brother had been executed unheard, on the ground that he was plotting to overthrow the Government—a charge in all probability true. But the flagrant injustice of the sentence under such circumstances is made only a deeper proof of the evil days upon which the country had fallen, when we know that it was endorsed both by Cranmer and Latimer. Somerset's own doom was approaching, and in October he in turn was supplanted by Warwick, and sent to the Tower; his supplanter sharing his qualities of greed and selfishness, but excelling him in artfulness, while lacking that curious good-nature which mysteriously endeared the fallen Protector to the Commons.

Hitherto Cranmer's personal leanings had been rather to the German than the Swiss reformers; but

it is evident that about this time he was beginning to feel the influence of those more advanced foreigners who had recently been finding their way into England. When the Prayer-Book was in preparation, the concessions made to Calvin's views had been slight, and the disciples of Zurich and Geneva shook their heads over the slothfulness of Thomas of Canterbury. But in the parliamentary debates of January (1549) he obtained their applause, possibly from some misapprehension as to his real position on the doctrine of the sacraments. At this time it is clear that he did not hold the view known as sacramentarian, which treated those rites as purely symbolical and commemorative. But the influence of such men as Peter Martyr was increasing. An ex-friar, who had passed on to the Lutheran stage, Martyr progressed towards a more definite Calvinism, and his appointment to the Chair of Divinity at Oxford led to the open and public debating of such high mysteries as the Sacrament of the Altar in a style which tended to a painful irreverence; pleasing no doubt to the mere controversialists, and to fanatics of both parties, but hardly helpful to the cause of religion.

A much more moderate man was Bucer, a Lutheran from Strasburg, who became Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and whose judgment probably carried more real weight both with Cranmer himself and with Nicholas Ridley, who appears to have drawn the primate in his train while his own opinions grew more pronounced. For some time chaplain to the archbishop, Ridley was made Bishop of Rochester soon after Edward's accession, and Bishop of London in Bonner's place in 1550. A learned, resolute, and

advanced reformer, he appears to have been much less extravagant in his methods than many of his colleagues, and in spite of his activity in what is called the "altar war" — the substitution of communion tables for the sacrificial altar—his influence among the reforming leaders was rather restraining than otherwise, his enthusiasms keeping pace with his intelligence. However his views changed, the change was steady and not vacillating; whereas Cranmer was ever alternating between intellectual convictions which he trembled to avow, and avowals which went beyond his convictions. Both men form a strong contrast to the third of the most famous martyrs of Mary's reign, Hugh Latimer: who never had any pretensions to the title of theologian or philosopher, but was a great orator and a great moralist with a strong tinge of quixotism.

The influx of foreign Protestants was the cause of a very curious innovation—the formation by authority of a sort of ecclesiastical body of foreigners under the supervision of a Polish Protestant of noble birth known as Laski or Alasco, who was also intimate and influential with the advanced Anglican divines. Certain heretical opinions continued to be severely dealt with, more particularly those tainted with Socinianism; but not a few of the heresies of the late reign were by this time admitted into the recognised field of debate. The purpose, however, of the institution of Alasco's Church was less the protection of the foreign Protestants than their restraint from falling into the dangerous ways of Anabaptism.

Two other men exercised a powerful influence in the direction of Puritanism—John Knox and Hooper.

Knox, of the straitest sect of the Calvinists, was destined to set the dour stamp of his arrogant austerity on an entire nation; but before he took up his task in Scotland he helped to mould the Puritan material in the southern country, in the character of a licensed preacher. Hooper was a disciple of Zurich, who became chaplain to Somerset, and rapidly achieved the position of a leader of the advanced school.

A considerable time elapsed before Cranmer and Hooper found themselves in accord. The burning questions between the reformers had now been resolved into two groups—the controversies concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, and those about ceremonies and vestments.

Until Henry's death, authority in England had maintained the doctrine of Transubstantiation; but authority hardly waited for the repeal of the Six Articles Act to modify that position, which was certainly not asserted in the First Prayer-Book, though it may have been compatible therewith. It would seem, on the whole, that Cranmer, Ridley, and generally those of the reformers who had not gone direct to Zurich or Geneva for their inspiration, continued in some form or other to uphold the doctrine of the Real Presence; but then, as now, their critics could not agree in interpreting their views. Cranmer published a work on the subject which provoked the imprisoned Gardiner, as some say, to castigate him in a reply—as others say, to invite his own castigation in the archiepiscopal rejoinder. Cranmer's learning was more extensive than Gardiner's, and the latter certainly committed himself to repudiating as fictions of his antagonist explanations of the catholic doctrines

which had been formulated by the most revered doctors of the Church. There are, however, some points which can be arrived at without much dubitation. Cranmer definitely rejected the theory that any material change took place in the bread and wine; but, on the other hand, he also denied that the participation was a merely symbolical act. Less definitely he seems to have held that the Presence is not in the elements, but is imparted to the partaker in the act of participation. Gardiner affirmed the Presence to be called into the bread and wine by the act of consecration, but failed to provide any intelligible account of what he meant by that Presence. To less subtle intellects it would appear that the ultimate distinction between the two points of view is, that on Gardiner's the elements become themselves an object of worship by consecration, and on Cranmer's they do not. The Lutheran view, on the other hand, attempts to specify the manner of the Presence in a way rejected alike by the Roman doctors and by the Anglicans. As Ridley himself put it: the Romans affirmed that after the consecration there is one substance, the body and blood of Christ; he and Cranmer affirmed that there is one substance, bread and wine; but the Lutherans affirmed that there are two. But it has never been shown that either Cranmer or Ridley questioned that the actual Presence of Christ is actually imparted to the recipient in the act of participation; wherein they differed completely and effectively from the whole of the Swiss school.

But to the vulgar mind, the issue which appeared important was whether or no the elements were an object of worship. It was an instance of the crucial idea of

the Reformation, or of one of the two crucial ideas. The Reformation claimed to be a restoration of the pure doctrine always held by the Church, but corrupted and abused by pontiffs and doctors. It struck at practices which might be commendable in themselves, but opened the door to abuses. It suspected doctrines of which such practices were a natural corollary. It found the due reverence born of association degenerating in practice into actual idolatry of material things. It found the splendour of ceremonial translated into a subordination of the truth signified to the symbol. It found the aids to human frailty elevated into conditions of grace. It set about remedying these things often with an appalling crudity and violence generating an irreverence no more commendable than the idolatry which it displaced. Idolatry and irreverence alike were a degeneration from the pure worship which it was sought to restore. The irreverence, however, was not inherent in the Reformation; it was an accident of the convulsive conditions under which it took place.

But just as an exaggerated importance attached to ceremonial observances, an exaggerated importance attached to their abrogation; and in the latter half of Edward's reign it seemed as though before long the extremists would carry matters with a high hand. The party of resistance were held in check; Gardiner and Bonner were already in prison, and thither Tunstall of Durham followed them. Heath and Day were turned out of their bishoprics. The moderate men, like Cranmer and Ridley, still managed to maintain a preponderating influence in the councils of the Church, and formularies and public pronouncements continued to be possible of acceptance except by extreme re-

actionaries; nevertheless, it was more and more evident that the revolutionaries were making way.

Most notable of these was Hooper, who has been called the father of Nonconformity—a term which has come to be curiously misused. Nonconformity implied nothing in the shape of dissent or separatism, but was a protest against regulations imposed by the Act of Uniformity. Its aim was not schism, but revision. In its initial stages, it was concerned mainly with the enforcement of rules about vestments and the like, which lacked scriptural authority. In 1550 Hooper, already highly distinguished as a preacher, was offered a bishopric. He declined, because he objected to the rules about vestments in the ordination service. A considerable quarrel arose over the matter, and both Peter Martyr and Bucer endeavoured to bring Hooper round, but he remained obstinate. It was not till March of the following year that he gave way. Nor did he after his appointment and consecration withdraw from his general attitude: in which it need hardly be said that he had the vigorous support of John Knox.

In 1551 a serious attempt was at last made to deal with the old-standing problem of harmonising the canon law with the civil law, a business for which it had been arranged repeatedly at recurring intervals that a commission of thirty-two should be chosen; which, however, never seems to have got itself appointed till now, when it promptly delegated its duties to a committee of eight. The attempt was seriously made, but the result was abortive as far as legislation was concerned.

The scheme which the committee evolved is known

as the "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum," and was not so much a revision of the canon law as an attempt to construct a constitution for the Church on abstract principles. It was never made law; it was never submitted to Convocation; it had no practical influence whatever on the course of the Reformation; but it illustrates the attitude of Cranmer, who seems beyond question to have been the guiding spirit in its construction. It does not appear to have entered into his scheme that there should be any curtailment of the old jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts. The most remarkable feature, on the whole, appears to be the active revival of the old diocesan synods, in which the bishop should meet his clergy for discussion; whereas (though here the intention is open to doubt) the provincial Convocations were to be reduced to assemblies of the bishops of the two provinces, called by the archbishop "for grave cause" with the king's assent.

More important, however, in fact, were the measures of 1552—the Second Act of Uniformity, and the Second Prayer-Book; and in 1553 the publication of the "Forty-Two Articles," of which the later Thirty-Nine were but a slight modification.

This Second Act of Uniformity, passed early in the year, for the first time applied penalties for disobedience to the laity. In its first shape the purport of the bill was to reaffirm the authority of the First Prayer-Book, leaving spiritual censure as the only punishment for lay recusancy. It was, however, transformed into a measure authorising a revised Prayer-Book not yet published, while explicitly stating that such changes as should therein appear would not imply defect in the book as already authorised, but

were to be made in order to guard against misunderstanding. Further, not only were the clergy who conducted services other than those authorised liable to heavy penalties as under the First Act of Uniformity, but any of the laity who attended such services were made liable to imprisonment. The new Act, however, was not to come into operation till the close of the year.

Whether the First Prayer-Book had been submitted to Convocation is a question on which the evidence is inconclusive. The volume of 1552 was not so submitted; explicitly, its authority was that of the king and Parliament. The revision appears to have been the work of the same committee which drew up the "Reformatio Legum," and to have been due partly to the criticisms of Martyr and Bucer, partly to the attitude of the Nonconformists, to whom a greater latitude was given than by any other enactment. In this connection it is important to note that the revisers, in opposition to this group, and notably to Knox and Hooper, inserted a rubric enjoining the posture of kneeling at the time of receiving the sacrament. A determined effort was made at the last moment to have this rubric rejected, but Cranmer stood firm, and, instead of that change, the "black rubric" was added, explaining or purporting to explain what that posture was not to be taken to imply. Extensive as the changes were in many respects, their total effect was to extend greater latitude to the advanced school, without drawing closer the restrictions on the opposite party; portions of the service were modified so as to admit of, without insisting on, a Calvinistic interpretation; while no mention was made of sundry

ornaments and ceremonial details which had been expressly enjoined in the previous book.

A few words should be added with regard to the Ordinal or Ordination Service—which had been issued as an addendum to the Prayer-Book in 1550, and now took a slightly amended form—as bearing on one of the vexed questions of ecclesiastical controversialists, the apostolic succession, denied by the Romanists to the Anglican clergy. One ceremony only, that of handing the chalice and the paten, is therein omitted which has been held necessary to the validity of ordination; nor is it possible to prove that this was in use earlier than the tenth century. A second question, however, arises as to whether it was the intention of the service to convey the apostolic succession. We have seen that in Henry's reign Cranmer himself had given it as his opinion that the prince could appoint clergy without the recognised rites; but that in those rites the succession had been maintained, and that it was seemly and desirable that this should continue. The archbishop's view, however, was then overruled by the majority of his colleagues, and the necessity of maintaining the succession was upheld. There is no reason to suppose that Cranmer's views on this head had undergone a change; in which case, evidently, not only the more conservative authorities, but those who thought with him, did intend that the succession should be preserved. Moreover, that formal intention is explicitly set forth in the preface. Hence, to invalidate the position, it would be necessary to show either that the Anglican Church as a body has at some time formally repudiated that intention; or that bishops have been consecrated with the omission of

fundamental circumstances in the service, so invalidating all ordinations at their hands; or else to fall back on the contention that failure of intention on the part of any individual bishop would invalidate his ordinations.

The final attempt of the reign at an exposition of religious principles, which should compass the great end of Uniformity, was the issuing of the Forty-Two Articles. These also were the work of the Prayer-Book revisers; like that volume, they were not submitted to Convocation, and were indeed published by order of the Council. They had been in preparation for some time, and underwent considerable modifications after their first draft, partly in consequence of the Nonconformist criticisms, which had been invited. In principle they do not greatly differ from the Thirty-Nine which finally took their place, being manifestly, like the Prayer-Book itself, characterised by the desire of extending the utmost possible latitude, and making conformity possible even to the Days and Heaths on the one hand, and the Knoxes and Hoopers on the other.

But now the reign of Josiah was drawing to a close: the hand of Death was heavy upon him. It cannot be said that that reign presents a pleasing picture: rarely, indeed, has there been a more consistently inefficient and unprincipled Government than that of the Seymours and the Dudleys. That Government favoured the Reformation, and it was a practically inevitable corollary that there was much of what can only at the best be called grave unseemliness in the methods by which the movement was carried on. Those who resisted it were treated with a tyrannical harshness;

it was utilised by the civil authorities for the purpose of private enrichment; and of what was taken from the Church only a scandalously small proportion was devoted to charitable and educational objects; though doubtless that small proportion, mainly in the form of grammar schools and hospitals, has proved fruitful of great good to the country. The destruction of altars and of images was carried out with indecent and lamentable violence and bigotry; the public disputations, as at Oxford, were conducted with a shocking disregard of good taste and dignity.

Nevertheless, although the powers at work were too turbulent to be held restrained by any hand less firm and skilful than that of an Elizabeth, it is remarkable to observe what moderation was imported into the ends achieved. That primary feature of the English Reformation, the substitution of English for Latin in the services of the Church as in the Bible, was an indisputable good, save in the eyes of those who believe that all knowledge should be carefully withheld from the great mass of their fellows. Something of splendour, something of awe, was removed from the ceremonial, but far less than if the Puritans had had their full way. The Scriptures were restored to their place as the final authority: but the voice of tradition was not allowed to be silenced. A comprehensive breadth was achieved, such as no other ecclesiastical organisation has compassed. The Church refused to pronounce dogmatically where reason and Scripture are inconclusive, or to affirm an infallible interpretation of ambiguous dicta. For those who held that the only alternative to the infallibility of Rome was the infallibility of Geneva, such an outcome was un-

satisfactory; but the effect was, to include within the fold the great bulk of those who were not prepared to accept a pope at either extreme.

Nor does it seem possible to question that for this great result Cranmer, stiffened by Ridley, may claim the chief, almost the entire credit. But for him, the Church would inevitably have been severed into the two camps, and the Reformation would either have been overturned or have taken the lines which it followed under Knox's leadership in Scotland. But Cranmer showed that there was a more excellent way. The hand that steered the barque was none too firm, yet it kept a true course through stormy seas. He did not, indeed, achieve such a harmony but that factions have ever since arisen periodically, crying that they alone have a right to march under the Church's banner, and bringing on themselves the retort that they have no business under that banner at all. But that is the inevitable result of comprehension, and has been known to occur when a far more rigid agreement was enforced. If comprehension, coupled with historic continuity, are qualities to be desired, Cranmer's distinction is as honourable as it is unique; since, but for him, one or other of the two would assuredly have been lost to the Anglican Church. As it was, he preserved them both, and after the Marian cataclysm the Elizabethans established the structure which Cranmer had framed.

CHAPTER XII

Reaction and Counter-Reaction: 1553–1559

Edward was dying. By the will of Henry viii. his sister Mary had been named successor to the throne. Mary had continued throughout the reign to adhere stubbornly to the Mass; the prospects of the reformers under her sway looked extremely doubtful, and there were members of the Council who anticipated from it their own ruin.

Northumberland—such was the title Warwick had taken to himself — was both ambitious and unscrupulous. The line of succession was already disputable. The marriages of the mothers of Mary and Elizabeth had both been pronounced void. If they could be set aside, the next heir would be the grandchild of Henry's elder sister Margaret, who had married the king of Scots; and next, the grandchild of his younger sister Mary, who had married the Duke of Suffolk. Northumberland married his own son to the last, the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey, proposing that Mary, Elizabeth, and Mary of Scotland should all be passed over, and that the king should set aside his father's will, but should act on that precedent and name the Lady Jane as his successor.

The king was very well pleased; one member only

of the Council, Hales, absolutely declined assent; one other, Cranmer, held out, even to tears, against the legality of the scheme, but finally yielded to the entreaties of Edward and the authority of the law officers on the technical point. But the plan was so utterly shameless that it defeated its own object. When Edward died, the attempt to supplant Mary proved hopelessly abortive, and she was hailed as sovereign with a heartiness which would probably have been altogether wanting if she had ascended the throne without opposition.

That some reversal of ecclesiastical policy would follow was obvious. The bulk of the population had not accepted the new arrangements with enthusiasm. It was the turn of the party who had been held in subjection for the last six years; and the restitution of the deprived prelates, with the immediate restoration of the Mass, were matter of course. That a restraining hand should be laid on those who had abetted the abortive treason of Northumberland, and on those who had been most actively hostile to Gardiner and Bonner and to the Mass itself, was absolutely reasonable. It was perhaps curious that while the Act of Uniformity was still the law of the land, the queen should by her own example practically assure immunity to those who set it at defiance; but the anomaly was inevitable. Certainly, at the opening of Mary's reign, no one had cause to complain of undue severity on her part, of undue haste to take advantage of her party's return to power, or of her acting less generously or less tolerantly than her opponents had done. Northumberland was executed, and his principal associates were placed in confinement; the foreign Protestants who did not

make haste to withdraw themselves were warned to disperse; and within a couple of months, Latimer, Hooper, Coverdale, and several others besides Cranmer and Ridley were imprisoned; but with no harsher treatment than had been shown to the deprived prelates in the preceding reign.

Both Ridley and Cranmer had been markedly identified with the treason of the Dudleys; but it would seem as if Cranmer's plea in defence, that he had only given way under almost irresistible pressure, would have sufficed for his deliverance, but for one of those courageous avowals on his part which counterbalanced his strange submissions. It was rumoured that he had himself set up the Mass again, and his denial of the charge was so uncompromising and so defiant that he was sent to the Tower.

The king had died on 6th July; Mary was crowned on 1st October, and Parliament met on the 5th. The practical business before it was to annul the ecclesiastical legislation of Edward's reign, and to restore the position as Henry VIII. had left it, except that the Six Articles Act was not revived and the appropriated Church property was not restored. Further than this it hardly went for the time being. Convocation, sitting at the same period, showed an immediate inclination to welcome the reaction, but not without hot debates, in which some of the reformers showed the courage of their opinions.

Hardly, however, had the year closed, when matters assumed a much more threatening aspect. Such hopeful possibilities as Mary's accession had offered were wrecked over the Spanish marriage. A union between her and Philip, the prince of Spain, son of the

Emperor, was in course of negotiation; and in the eyes of the whole British nation the plan was anathema. Gardiner, now at the head of the Council, would have been well enough pleased to avoid it altogether; as it was, he could only insist upon such conditions as might decently safeguard the realm from foreign domination. But nothing could remove the suspicion that the ultimate effect of the marriage would be to convert England into an appanage of Spain. The general sentiment found vent in Sir Thomas Wyatt's rising. For a brief moment, as the insurgents approached London, it seemed as if Mary's throne was tottering. Her royal display of courage, her bold appeal to the citizens of London, saved her. The rising was a failure. But it had the direct effect of ending the policy of clemency. Lady Jane, most innocent of traitors, was led to the block; many more were executed. There was still nothing savage or abnormal in the severity exercised. Throughout the year 1554 the attitude of the queen and her advisers presents itself as that of a Government which knew that one main feature of its policy was intensely unpopular, that there existed many miscellaneous grounds of discontent, and that it was necessary to make a display of the armed hand. It was no longer safe to be magnanimous; more than that, there was a plausible excuse for retaliatory harshness even where milder counsels could involve no risk.

Thus the year had hardly begun, Wyatt had hardly fallen, when the reforming clergy began to feel the force of the return to the nominal conditions of Henry's last years. Seven bishops were deprived, on the ground of marriage or of false views on the

sacrament, or both. Many of the parish clergy were deprived in like manner for having married. The number who so suffered is sometimes stated in very startling figures; on the whole, there is much to be said for the estimate that one in every five of the whole body was so deprived. In the argument, however, which disputes a larger proportion, one point seems to have been left out of count. It is remarked that, apart from the numbers who personally held to celibacy as a point of conscience, it is scarcely likely that so large a body would have taken to themselves wives in so short a time. It should, however, be remembered that during a great part of Henry's reign marriage of the secular clergy had been not unusual—as, for instance, Cranmer himself was married. These men had been compelled under the Six Articles to part from their wives, who had returned to them as soon as that Act was repealed. It is not as though the whole of the clergy had been actually celibate until the legitimation of such contracts in Edward's second year.

However, when all possible allowance is made for exaggeration, to penalise so large a body of persons who had acted not only with the authority of Parliament and Crown, but also in accord with the formal sentiment of Convocation, was a step of excessive harshness; and harshness was now the order of the day. That severity had the support of Parliament; but Parliaments were still, as they had been since Cromwell applied them to the purpose of giving a constitutional aspect to the royal mandates, composed in such manner that they might confirm the policy of the Government. There was a limit to their sub-

servience, which was always reached when their purses were threatened; but otherwise, the mutterings of parliamentary resistance were ominous of a storm of indignation outside. So now, if the question of restoring Church property was mooted, Parliament gave an emphatic negative, while cheerfully endorsing the reversal of the general policy of the last seven years.

In July the Spanish marriage was celebrated, just twelve months after Edward's death; and from that time forward that great portion of the people which was, broadly speaking, indifferent to religious reforms as such, is found regarding the Government with steadily increasing suspicion and dislike. The reaction had reached the limit of approval: it was soon to pass the bounds of even a moderately willing acquiescence. In fact, the Spanish marriage was perhaps accidentally something of a turning-point with the queen's own policy. Hitherto, there had been a show of maintaining Henry's attitude, the attitude in which he had always had Gardiner's support, of Supreme Head of a Church which had rejected the papal yoke without change of doctrine. Now, however, it seemed clear that there was to be a restoration of papal authority. A papal legate was again to be seen in England; there were ominous hints of revived penalties for the heretics, who were understood to include the reformers in general. In early days Gardiner had stood for the nation against Roman dominion—now he seems to have fallen back on the belief that the Roman dominion was a condition of suppressing the revolution which he accounted the greater evil. Nor is it hard to find excuse for him. The revolution had insulted

him, silenced him, treated him as an enemy. Gardiner was no saint. He was not bloodthirsty or particularly revengeful; but neither was he particularly forgiving or naturally tender-hearted. His instincts were just, but his justice was always tempered by policy. Now he had been warped by the injustice he had himself suffered, and was ready to play the part of an embittered reactionary. Reconciliation with Rome involved a somewhat startling change of front in the man who had virtually told Clement VII. that unless he agreed to annul the marriage of Henry with Mary's mother, England would discard his authority. But Mary herself was responsible for the policy of her reign. As with her father before her and her sister after her, her will was supreme. And her heart was set on the reconciliation, and on the purging of heresy. Reconciliation to be effected through the medium of her cousin Cardinal Pole had been under discussion ever since her brother's death; and now his arrival as papal legate was preceded by an ominous activity on the part of the reactionary bishops—notably Bonner—in the visitation of their dioceses.

November saw the arrival of Pole with great honour, and the assembly of Paliament. The Houses presented a supplication to the king and queen, promising to revoke all laws and ordinances which had been made against the papal authority, and entreating to be received again as repentant children into the bosom of the Church. The reconciliation was completed with much ceremonious jubilation; and on the following Sunday Gardiner recanted from the pulpit the principle of which he had for so many years been one of the foremost champions. Parliament then forthwith proceeded to renew the old

Lollard heresy laws, and to revoke all Henry's ecclesiastical legislation subsequent to his twentieth year—in other words, the whole legislative Reformation; with one exception, since all holders of what had been Church lands were confirmed in their possession. Restitution was not included in the pious intent of Rome's repentant children.

So ended, for the time, the breach with Rome; so was ushered in the day of purging, with hymns of triumph for the return of the lost sheep to the fold. From prison, however, came the voice of the reformers—the voice of stubborn challenge—challenge which was to take a very practical shape. Gardiner had stood in the pulpit of St. Paul's to declare that his whole career under Henry had been an error; but he could not undo the work in which he had taken so large a part. How far he was responsible for the terrible chapter of history now to open, it is hard to tell. Hitherto it was due to him in no small degree that there had remained at least traces of statesmanship in the conduct of affairs. It was he who had so fenced round the marriage treaty as to minimise Philip's power of interference with the English realm. His opposition to the Spanish interests may have still prevented him from acquiring his queen's complete confidence. Whether he ever attempted to check the torrent of the impending persecution is doubtful; certainly it raged with sufficient severity while he was yet living; yet it did not develop its most frenzied recklessness till he was gone. He, at any rate, was not its chief promoter.

The terrible, tragic figure which occupied the English throne and dominated the drama was cast in a different

mould. With a woman's heart, passionate and tender, she had learnt in suffering to steel herself against pity for herself or for others. A zealot with a mission to perform, she accounted the urgency of her own natural magnanimity as the Tempter's whisper. Scorned by the husband to whom she was devoted, she would fain have won the love of her people, yet for her people's good, as she deemed it, she chose rather to be clothed in their hate. Not hers was the callous tyranny of her father, the cold-blooded policy of a Thomas Cromwell, the lust of cruelty of an Alva. Not hers even the grim triumph with which the Puritan Fathers gave the sons and daughters of Belial to the flames as an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord of hosts. But hers it was to smite, relentless and unsparing, rending her own heart with every stroke; losing, in the performance of the ghastly duty she had conceived for herself, love and honour and name and fame; and bringing on the cause, for which she had wrought the awful sacrifice, destruction more overwhelming than its bitterest enemies could have effected.

The heresy laws came into force on January 20, 1555. The first victim was Rogers, who probably was the author of Matthew's Bible. He was burned at the stake on February 4. From that time forth the persecution continued, never slackening, but rather increasing in fury as the reign went on. During less than four years the number who perished in the flames was little if at all short of three hundred. In the first year there was something of discrimination. Many of the leaders of the Reformation were in prison already, and it was natural that they should be among the first

struck down. Hooper and Ferrar, Latimer and Ridley, all perished in this year; Cranmer in the following March; Rogers, Taylor of Hadleigh, Saunders, Bradford were all prominent men; but with them died not a few undistinguished but stubborn followers of the new ways, here one and there another. By the end of the year, the men of mark as teachers and preachers, saving Cranmer, had either borne their witness, or placed themselves out of reach in Switzerland or Germany. But the tale of the burnings did not diminish: as the individuals were less conspicuous, the effect was made up by martyrdoms of five, ten, twenty at a time, till the country was seething with disgust.

It is singular to find that there is no possibility of attaching the responsibility to any group of persons. The Spaniards or the bishops, or both, along with Mary, are generally held accountable. Bonner, of London, acquired the same unenviable epithet as his royal mistress. Yet the Spaniards do not really seem to have encouraged the extreme of persecution; Philip and Philip's father were politic enough to have some appreciation of the English temper. Pole obviously wished every available loophole to be left open for the evasion of enforcing the law. In Gardiner's own diocese of Winchester there was no execution for heresy while he lived. Bonner, on whose doings the martyrologists exercise their most lurid powers, left no stone unturned to enable those who were haled before him to preserve their liberty by recantation. In fact, if the apologists could be altogether credited, we should have to believe that it was the Commons who egged the queen on against the

restraining influences of all those whom Protestant fanatics have preferred to reproach.

It is reasonable and intelligible to believe that the moving spirit in the persecution was the queen herself. For her, it was not a question of policy or popularity or personal vengeance; it was a terrible conviction of a fearful duty, to save the souls of her people, purging the nation by fire. But, in fact, Parliament, bishops, and Spaniards, as well as Pole, were all consenting parties, though not eager. The effect of setting the heresy laws in motion was probably not realised. They had been there in Henry's time—they had been reinforced by the Six Articles: but very few people had been put to death under them. The crack of the "whip with six strings" had usually sufficed to make its actual application superfluous. It is reasonable to suppose that Parliament and bishops alike anticipated a similar result now. On the other hand, the reformers had made for themselves not a few bitter enemies, who were not averse to seeing them individually suffer. Philip may have had a politic objection to the application in England of methods which he did not hesitate to enforce against the equally obstinate Dutch; but it may be suspected that he cared little, and that the mild protests of the Spaniards were more for the sake of show, of diverting unpopularity, than anything else. As for Pole, his conscience was of the type which would have agreed with Mary, while his instincts were mild and gentle, so that he was unable to restrain while anxious to evade.

Broadly speaking, it would appear that Mary, logically enough from her point of view, desired that

the laws should be rigorously enforced for the utter rooting out of heresy; Gardiner and Bonner and the rest would have been satisfied with silencing the heretics. Unfortunately for the policy, the heretics declined to be silenced, and with unprecedented stubbornness preferred martyrdom to recantation. Where laws of this class have been placed on the statute-book, their effective application notoriously depends very greatly on the attitude of the officers who have to administer them, and a dozen informations will be laid before one court for one that will be laid before another. So while it seems thoroughly unjust to accuse Bonner of a thirst for blood, his manner and methods encouraged the heresy-hunters, while those of others among his brethren tended to check them. This, coupled with the fact that London was always a hotbed of advanced opinions, sufficiently explains the very large proportion of martyrs who were put to death under Bonner's jurisdiction.

Nor is it altogether fair to forget that recalcitrants who did happen to be brought before either Gardiner or Bonner were apt to take up their parable against those prelates personally with a freedom which Nathan or Micaiah might have envied, and which was hardly an incentive to leniency on the part of a choleric judge. Anyone who reads with an impartial mind the trial of Christian's comrade Faithful at Vanity Fair cannot help recognising that no judge could have shown mercy to the prisoner unless his temper had been superhuman; and the Puritan martyrs were no less vigorous than Faithful.

However the blame is to be distributed for those four years of terror, the attempt to bring the Marian

persecution into comparison with any other in the course of English history is futile. Rome had her martyrs under Elizabeth; but half of them were, past question, actually mixed up with treasonous plots; nor were there more of them in the aggregate during her five-and-forty years than in the four of the Marian persecution. The Scottish Covenanters experienced persecution, but in the eyes of their persecutors they were often active rebels. Under Mary, the issue was the plain and direct one of conscience. Here and there the offence was aggravated by a charge of having disputed the sovereign's legitimacy; but there was no pretence that the penalties were incurred for anything but heresy, and no question that much which was now called heresy had in the late reign been enjoined as orthodox. Political sects have been persecuted in the name of religion, like the Lollards; religious profession has been treated as a mark of political malevolence, as with the Jesuits; but the martyrs of Mary's reign were burned uncompromisingly for religion and nothing else. Nor was the onslaught made upon extravagant doctrinaires. The crucial question habitually was whether the natural body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament. Nothing short of the unqualified doctrine of Transubstantiation was accepted, with submission to the authority of the pope. It was not an attack on Anabaptists or Calvinists or Puritans, but on the whole Reformation; a campaign of the reactionary party in the Anglican Church against the reforming party in the Anglican Church; an onslaught upon the position to which all but a few of the clergy had in fact conformed, though with varying willingness or reluctance. The effect was to unite

the Mass and the Roman dominion inextricably in the popular mind, making it impossible ever to revert to the position of Henry. The heroic bearing of the martyrs themselves called forth a passion of horrified sympathy which a more commonplace harshness and a more commonplace suffering would never have evoked; the doom of the primate of England, his waverings and his final triumphant humiliation, had an incalculable dramatic force which struck home as mere logic could never do.

Hence the extraordinary effect of that persecution on the people at large. It may be doubted very much whether half of them had more than the vaguest glimmerings of perception of the theological difference between the Mass and the Communion service; but they connected the Mass with the persecuting faction, and everything associated with the Mass had the reek of Mary's fires clinging to it. Antagonism to Spain did the rest. Whether men called themselves Protestants or Catholics, whatever English people recognise as "popery" has been from that day to the great bulk of them an accursed thing.

CHAPTER XIII

The Least of the Martyrs: 1529–1556

It has been said that the stout bearing of the martyrs, and the sympathy they won thereby, were of no little avail in turning the hearts of their countrymen from apathetic indifference, or even apathetic hostility, to warm partisanship. In all the years of the Reformation, until 1555, there had been excitement, violence, zealotry on both sides, but not any general deep-rooted intensity of feeling. That was brought into being by the moral shock of the persecution, the force of which was indefinitely multiplied by the admiration its victims inspired.

For the appeal of manifest heroism is well-nigh irresistible, and the martyrs, one after the other, stood revealed as heroes. In the stress of controversy, they had shown, it may be, baser qualities. Ridley could be harsh, Hooper narrow and pragmatical, Latimer insolent, as all men might know; and the lesser folk had their normal failings. But now what all men saw or heard of was the unflinching courage, the unfaltering loyalty to truth, the unfailing dignity in the face of torture, temptation, and insult, which wiped out the memory, if any there were, of unheroic traits. They saw the wife of Rogers, surrounded by their eleven

children, bidding her husband God-speed with words of encouragement. They saw Rowland Taylor take his daughter Mary in his arms, and kneel down with his wife to say the Lord's Prayer, while "the sheriff wept apace, and so did divers others of the company." They heard the jubilant words of Latimer to Ridley, triumphantly prophetic. They marked the same spirit again and again declaring itself as fresh victims were brought to the stake; and they knew that those victims were martyrs and heroes in very deed.

But—Cranmer?

We know what happens when a regiment that has won good repute and credit is smitten on some fatal day with that inexplicable madness called panic, and in one short hour tramples its honour in the dust; how many deeds of desperate daring it must accomplish before it can wipe out that one blot on its fair fame.

So was it with Cranmer. Of all men in the country, for him recantation was most morally inconceivable. It was he who step by step had seemed to guide the Reformation; who had justified each step with the authority of his great place; who avowed himself to have passed from error to truth, leading hosts in his train; who, when his enemies recovered power, had faced them and outreasoned them with a resolution that Latimer himself had not exceeded. That he should fail at the last; that he should faint and turn back from the fiery trial that so many lesser men had faced without blenching—this was a thing not to be forgiven, and by men forgiveness is denied him, or such scant pardon is granted as may be joined with only half-repressed scorn. The brand of the

craven is upon him; nor have the flames of Oxford erased it.

Thus it is that among the men who worked for the Reformation the ill-fated archbishop has the fewest friends. Henry and Cromwell have their apologists—rather, to avoid possible misapprehension, let us say their zealous champions; as on the other side, Gardiner and Bonner have their defenders. Even their enemies have words of reluctant praise for Latimer and Ridley, and for Hooper himself. Elizabeth and her ministers are judged by a frankly political standard, and receive the applause, if not always the esteem, of the historian. The Puritans have their partisans no less uncompromising than their foes. But those who speak Cranmer's name, if they do not accompany it with positive railing, for the most part pronounce it with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

For, to the extreme "Catholic" party, he is the man who betrayed the Church to Erastianism; to the Puritans, he is a Mr. Facing-both-ways; and to those who join neither extreme, he is the guide whose shame they cannot deny. Despite that great rallying of his courage, when he retracted his recantation and faced his doom, steadfast in self-abasement, every deed of his career is coloured by the one pitiful failure.

Yet if he had died with Latimer a few months earlier—nay, if he had been peacefully released from the burden of life before Mary laid her hand upon the reformers—the judgment passed on him would have been far different. None indeed would have ranked him among those strong spirits of iron will who, like a Luther, stand out as giants, dwarfing those who are set beside them; rather his name might have been coupled

with Melanchthon—of the type that are made to be not leaders, but counsellors. For, be it observed, the primary business of a leader is to make up his own mind; the primary business of the counsellor is to provide the data which shall enable the leader to make up his mind wisely—to influence, not to control. Throughout Henry's reign, Cranmer, like everyone else, was the king's servant. The king took his advice or not, as it pleased him. With the exception of More and Fisher, there was no politician and no ecclesiastical dignitary who ventured on open resistance to the tyrant; not Gardiner nor Stokesley nor Tunstall, not even Wolsey or Cromwell. Once, at least, in his opposition to the Six Articles, Cranmer went further than the rest ever ventured; and in the matter of the King's Book he displayed undeniable courage.

Cranmer's whole career postulates his belief that the national sovereign is at the head of the ecclesiastical no less than of the civil polity. The theory may be right or wrong; but to hold it and act on it cannot with any show of justice be called a sign of pliancy or subserviency. He approved the abolition of the monastic system, and therein is certainly no cause of reproach. As for the methods by which it was carried out, it is possible that a stronger man in his place might have fought Cromwell; but no one gave sign of such independence of spirit. And he did, as many another did not, use his powers of persuasion for the diversion of the property seized into sound educational channels. He, like his neighbours, administered the laws against heresy of the extreme type; so did Latimer, so did More. None of them were suffi-

ciently in advance of their day to have grasped the conception of more than a limited toleration. But he openly opposed the passing of statutes for increasing and multiplying penalties for religious offences. If he urged the dissemination of the translated Scriptures, the introduction of English services, the admission of modified doctrines, the suppression of some practices which the German Protestants had long before denounced without sparing; yet in all this there is nothing to which anyone who to-day claims to belong to the Anglican communion can possibly raise objection. Cranmer's offence against Rome is obvious; but against the most extreme section of the Anglican body it cannot be shown during Henry's reign to have amounted to more than this—that he did not stand up alone against the spoliation, and that he made the theory of secular supremacy his own.

For not resisting the spoliation, it is unwarrantable to reproach him, save as sharing in a universal condemnation. He would have stood alone had he done so, and have lost such chance as he had of exercising a practical influence. For the Royal supremacy, Fisher and More rejected it on principle, and gave their lives in witness; the rest who rejected it on principle submitted to it in fact. Cranmer, so far from rejecting it, held it as a cardinal principle. Ought he then, like Becket, to have changed his principles when he donned the pallium? On no other ground can he be blamed for maintaining them. Those Churchmen who hold that the Church is above the State, and that its subordination is a bondage sanctioned by physical force only, are justified in counting Cranmer among the enemy, but an open and avowed enemy on the

plain ground of conscientious conviction. Throughout Henry's reign, from the hour when Cranmer became archbishop, no prominent ecclesiastic, with the single exception of Fisher, is less open than Cranmer to the charge of having subordinated his genuine convictions to his personal advantage in supporting Henry's line of action.

Nor from the reformer's point of view can Cranmer fairly be blamed. The movement of his mind was very gradual. It was of that academic cast which weighs and deliberates, and seeks for new lights and fresh data, and for ever finds an infinite deal to be said on both sides; which perceives that a vast number of questions cannot be despatched with swift and uncompromising security. More and more, no doubt, he found the balance weighing in favour of the progressive as against the established views, and endeavoured to persuade the king to allow them a hearing. But he was not convinced that the established views were wrong. He did not affirm one doctrine in public while believing another in private: though he did not challenge destruction as the champion of toleration. He was content to let opinions mature into convictions before insisting on them, or committing himself to them irredeemably. He did not, in short, display the conspicuous courage which would have demanded universal acclamation, but he did not carry submission beyond the logical claims of his postulate concerning Sovereignty.

When his master died, and was succeeded on the throne by a boy, Cranmer's position was altered. He could not now escape assuming the functions of a leader. His duty was no longer ended when he had

counselled his sovereign: actual initiative was forced upon him, and the task was one for which he was not naturally fitted. Nevertheless, his achievement was remarkable. It was due to his guidance that the Anglican Church neither broke with the past as did the Calvinistic and in a less degree the Lutheran bodies, nor rejected the new criticism like the reactionaries, but so moulded its reformation—the formularies, the Prayer-Book, the practices enjoined or permitted—as to remain sufficiently acceptable if not actually satisfactory to moderate men of all parties. If the intention to maintain the Church as a comprehensive body was a right one—if it was right that she should rather meet the needs of the bulk of those who call themselves Christians than the desires of a lesser body—he deserves the highest praise for holding fast to it, in the face of increasing pressure driving him to a rejection either of Protestantism or of Catholicity. He succeeded in evolving a Church which was at once Catholic and Protestant. But for Cranmer and Ridley, the Hoopers, the Knoxes, and the Peter Martyrs would have dominated the reforming party altogether, and the moderate men would have been reabsorbed by the party of reaction. No small praise is due to the man who, forced by circumstances into a field of action for which he was ill-adapted, was yet so successful in the actual results of his work.

But if we turn to his personal record, the record of the man, not the statesman, how would he have stood in our estimation if he had never been brought to the last crucial test? Did he in the service of his master demean himself in unbecoming fashion?

Cranmer was conspicuously deficient in one quality

which is absolutely essential to a great career—self-reliance. When once he had been brought into contact with Henry, the king both fascinated and dominated him. There were men who did the king's bidding because he was a tyrant whom it was safer to obey: there were others whose downright loyalty to him would have made them commit treason against their country or their own consciences, and to their own destruction, if he might profit thereby. Cranmer appears to have been neither a time-server nor a devotee of the latter type, but to have been, as it were, mesmerised. It is not altogether rare to find people in private life whose will and conscience become the reflexion of someone else's will and conscience; here and there, too, a great statesman seems to produce such an effect on some of his followers; but the submission of an intellect so subtle and a conscience so delicate as Cranmer's affords a somewhat pathetic psychological study. The extreme point appears to have been reached on the occasions of the condemnation of Anne Boleyn and of Thomas Cromwell. For both of these Cranmer undoubtedly had a warm personal friendship, and in them, as in the king, he inspired in turn a genuine affection. But when the king declared them guilty, Cranmer could only admit with tears and travail of soul, though unconvinced by evidence, that guilty they must be. The archbishop's weakness is neither admirable nor edifying; but it is not born of fear, nor is it the politician's preference for expediency over right. It is the weakness of a man who never trusts his own judgment if it is opposed by that of another in whom he has learned to place implicit reliance. The whole tone of his

dissertations on the religious questions of the time is in accord. There is no English ecclesiastic of the day with whom he fears an engagement; but he cannot maintain an opinion against the king's decisive judgment.

When the immediate domination of Henry's mind is withdrawn, Cranmer's doubts of the accepted positions immediately recover force. No fresh personality replaces that of the dead monarch, but Ridley is at hand to confirm and establish the expansion which Henry had repressed: for Cranmer must needs have someone to lean on. He is in nowise one of the Titans, accumulating responsibilities on their own shoulders, hewing their way through dangers and difficulties, inspiring their followers with courage and enthusiasm; but he is the captain of a band composed of most inharmonious and incongruous elements which he does succeed in holding together over a decidedly arduous journey; though he himself would have found his truer sphere in a college cloister.

So when it came to the unhappy moment when Cranmer went with the rest of the Council and assented to Edward's will altering the succession, he acted as a man who cannot rely on his own judgment when he stands alone. He was not appealed to till the whole of the rest of the Council, with the exception of Hales, had been brought into professed agreement; and Ridley, whose courage has never been impugned, afforded him no support. A man of strong self-reliance would not have given way; to do so was weak, but it was neither dishonest nor cowardly on the face of it.

No one indeed would venture to claim for Cranmer

that his conduct while he was archbishop ever verged on the heroic. Yet more than once he had taken no small risk in attempting to dissuade Henry from some course on which he was bent; and twice at least, in the matters of the Six Articles and the King's Book, his enemies prematurely rejoiced in the belief that his boldness had wrought his destruction. They were wrong. Henry was too fond of him to be angry. But it argues a considerable moral courage in a man naturally timid and hesitating that he should have run such a risk; and once again, at least, there is no gainsaying his courage when he was charged on Mary's accession with having set up the Mass again at Canterbury. He could not indeed without shame have avowed such a step; yet he had the opportunity of quitting the country, an opportunity which many others seized without hint of reproach, and he deliberately elected to stand by his principles and face the danger rather than fly. Nor did he fail or show sign of yielding till he had been for more than two years a prisoner, and the fires of the persecution had been raging for close on a twelvemonth.

That declaration against the Mass opens the last act in Cranmer's tragedy; immediately after it he was committed to the Tower, and remained a prisoner till his life's end. True to his theory that the appointment of bishops to their Sees lay with the sovereign, he had required new licences to be issued when Edward's reign commenced; and he took for granted now that some other would take his place at Canterbury, though it was not till his death that the appointment was officially given to Pole. He was attainted for his share in the Dudley plot, but seems to have had some

hope that he would after all be allowed to retire into private life. For he asked leave to "open his mind on matters of religion" to the queen, that so he might feel himself discharged of his own duty, and free from any further call to interfere in public affairs, inasmuch as submission in act to the direct mandate of the sovereign was part and parcel of his theory of the Supremacy. Leave, however, was not given.

For some time he and Ridley were associated in the Tower: later Latimer and Bradford shared their chamber. There was no fluctuation in any of them. In April 1554 the three bishops were transferred to Oxford, where they were called on to enter on a disputation, separately, with a body of delegates. They maintained their position, with no more hint of wavering on Cranmer's part than on that of his colleagues, though his demeanour was marked by extreme patience and no little dignity, while the other two adopted a somewhat more defiant tone. As a result, all three were found guilty of heresy.

Almost with the new year the great persecution opened: Rogers, Hooper, and Taylor being the earliest victims. The three at Oxford had been formally condemned as heretics, after the disputation in 1554, but their condemnation was set aside, as having been prior to the reconciliation between the Church of England and Rome. Rome was to take them in hand. It was not till September that Cranmer, the first of them, was called to appear before the pope at Rome, the pontiff delegating the conduct of the trial to a Court to be held at Oxford, where he was represented by the Bishop of Gloucester.

Cranmer appeared, but refused to acknowledge the

papal jurisdiction, giving his answers as a public profession, not as admitting the Court's right to demand them. He refused to allow that in seceding from Rome he was acting as a schismatic. There was plenty of evidence that he had discarded the Roman authority, that he had maintained doctrines now called heretical, and that he had a wife: none of which points Cranmer disputed, but justified all of them. There was practically no support of the further charge that he had compelled subscription to articles, though the dividing line between persuasion and compulsion is not always easy to draw.

The Court was not to adjudicate; it was to lay the results of the trial before the pope himself; it was the pope himself who condemned Cranmer, and handed him over to the secular arm. The spectacle of the Bishop of Rome passing judgment on the Metropolitan of England, *papa alterius orbis*, was impressive; its effect on Nationalist sentiments, already seriously stirred by the Spanish match, must have been tremendous. The claim of absolute submission to Rome had never before been put forward in a shape so uncompromising and so tangible.

Ridley and Latimer met their fate before the pope had pronounced his condemnation of Cranmer. For dealing with them, legatine authority was sufficient. They were condemned, and burned on October 16. Cranmer is said to have witnessed their end from the roof of his prison.

Until this time there had been no hint of failure on Cranmer's part. Even at the time of his trial he wrote to the queen in terms which amounted to a reproof for subjecting the English Crown to Rome. But when

December came, there were signs of wavering. He asked to be allowed to confer with Tunstall, who, unable to travel, remarked that Cranmer would have been more likely to shake him than he Cranmer. Pole was no more willing to face discussion. A Spaniard named Soto was sent to him, ineffectually; then another, Garcia. It has been said, and seems consonant with Cranmer's character, that while he rejected the arguments of these divines, he broke down under his need of personal affection and moral support; for it had always been characteristic of him that he should enjoy the warmest affection from his intimates and from those of his own household. Now his isolation told on his emotional nature: not torture, but mere unkindness, overthrew him.

At any rate, about the end of January he wrote a submission. It did not take him far, hardly, indeed, beyond the conclusion deducible from his theory of the Royal Supremacy. In virtue of the Royal command, he would admit the papal supremacy so far as the laws of God and the realm permit. A few days later came a second submission, without the qualification; and it is said that he began to attend Mass. The only result, however, was his public degradation; a performance carried through with much unhappiness by Thirlby, and much open and coarse satisfaction by Bonner, Thirlby's colleague. On this occasion Cranmer claimed the right of appeal to a General Council, and once more declared that he would never say Mass.

The appeal he had already had prepared, expressing his principle that what was laid down in Scripture and by the Fathers of the Church was of authority, but that the doctrines he had rejected, now called

heretical, were modern innovations. The appeal was, of course, disallowed, or rather ignored.

Two more "submissions" followed. In the first he again accepted the Royal mandate, but appealed to a General Council to decide the questions of doctrine. The second was a declaration that he held the Catholic Faith as it had been from the beginning. The ground taken in the first submission and in the long-prepared appeal was maintained. Until this time, in fact—February 16—the utmost concession extracted from him, the utmost deviation from his past attitude, was the admission that papal supremacy might be established by Royal authority.

The reply was a writ to the mayor and bailiffs of Oxford to burn Cranmer, issued on February 24.

Within four weeks Cranmer met his doom, and the events of that brief period are extremely puzzling. He was removed from the prison to the deanery at Christ Church. The foreign friars at Oxford surrounded him and plied him with persuasion and argument; with the seductive prospect of release, and the terror of the death which might be escaped by a full and complete recantation. If the Court was responsible, its perfidy is unspeakable: but it is more likely that the friars persuaded themselves that they really might save Cranmer's life by getting the recantation, and must at any rate further the cause thereby.

Whatever the motive, Cranmer was now at last overcome. A sweeping recantation of his "heresies," including an unqualified admission of the papal supremacy, was submitted to him, signed by him, and printed for publication. The issue was promptly sup-

pressed, for reasons which can only be guessed at. The theory that it was a sheer forgery is not tenable; perhaps the most plausible explanation suggested is that the public was thought likely to regard it as a forgery, because it was attested only by the friar Garcia and one Sidall, who was an obscure person.

In place of this recantation, however, a new document was now submitted to the hapless prisoner; no mere retractation of opinions, but full of self-denunciation, humiliation, self-condemnation of the most abject kind.

This Cranmer wrote out and signed with his own hand. The thing is almost inconceivable. There have been men who have committed great crimes, and in the overwhelming passion of remorse and self-loathing have denounced themselves in such unmeasured terms; but since the days of Peter's denial, it may be doubted if anyone has in such abject terms renounced principles which he had maintained and still believed in through good report and evil report; unless it may be actually in the torture chamber, or under such awful stress of physical terror as at times may unhinge the reason, or from that sheer cynicism which holds conscience and self-respect as a feather's weight in the balance against physical ease. It seems as though in that hour of utter shame the mere degree of degradation ceased to be of any moment. Had Cranmer won his release thereby, had he held by that most pitiful act, his portion would have been shame for ever.

But, broken as he was, fallen as he seemed beyond redemption, redemption yet was his. That recantation demonstrates past question, not the character of the man, but the collapse of his nerve, the natural

infirmity with which he was born, the physical terror of suffering, which is the curse of many sensitive natures; the mastery whereof is the moral quality of courage. A great thing is the courage of those who do not know what fear is, a happy endowment rightly held in honour; but greater in the moral scale is the courage of those who defy and conquer the fear that is griping at their heart. That fearfulness was Cranmer's; and in those sad March days, he, who had for so many years held his infirmity under resolute control, for a brief space gave way utterly; but it was not for long. He was yet to rise again and grapple with it, and be victor in the last great hour.

What passed in the few days between the recantation and the day of doom none knows with certainty. On the 18th he signed; on the 21st he was taken from his prison, that he might make his recantation in public and pass to the stake. He had given no sign; it is only clear that in whatever passed he did not disturb the impression that all was what his executioners called well with him. We need not ask whether this was because his resolution was framed only when he had lost the last shred of hope, or because he desired only to ensure the opportunity of giving it effect. It would seem that no precise notification was given him either of the hopelessness of pardon or of the time of his doom. On the third morrow after the final fall, a mournful procession passed under frowning skies through driving rain from the prison to St. Mary's Church; the stricken prelate walking with a Spanish friar on either side. There was spoken over him, while often the tears rolled down his face as down the face of a child, the oration which should justify his

doom to men. When it was over, he was bidden to speak that all might know the reality of his conversion and his repentance. So he arose, and his repentance was manifest to all. The cry of the penitent sinner falling before the Throne of Mercy was a voice of sublime humiliation: the exhortation which followed was in all things fitting. Then came the confession of faith, at first in general terms. And now the time was come when he should confirm his renunciation of the heresies he had taught, and furnish the final triumph of his enemies. But his penitence was not for those "heresies," but for his denial of them. For a moment the meaning did not reach his hearers as he declared that what most of all troubled him was those writings which he had put forth contrary to the truth. The sudden shock of amazement came when he pronounced those writings to be the "bills" to which he had set his hand since his degradation "for fear of death, and to save my life if it might be." Without faltering, without palliation, he made full confession of the enormity of his sin, proclaiming that sign by which all men should know for ever that it was of this in very deed that he repented. "As my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished. For if I may come to the fire it shall first be burned." A few more words rejecting the pope and all his false doctrines, affirming once more that doctrine of the sacrament which he had put forth in his book, and the authorities hastily silenced him and hurried him from the pulpit. So quickly did he move towards the place of execution that the friars had much ado to keep up with him, struggling vainly to extract word

or sign by which the tremendous revulsion of his confession might be counteracted. Now, at least, his resolution was absolutely fast. He would pretend no excuse or palliation for the sin of his recantation: he would withdraw no syllable of its cancelment. They bound him to the stake, and he shook hands with many of the bystanders. The fire was kindled. Cranmer thrust his right hand into the flame, crying with a loud voice, "This hand hath offended," and so held it, withdrawing it only once, to wipe his brow; and all men might see it burning before the flame touched any other part of him. So he stood, lapped in fire, and neither spoke nor stirred again.

Thus died Thomas Cranmer, whose elegy sounds through the ages in the music of the English liturgy; highest of all the martyrs in station, accounted lowest of all in honour. For many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

CHAPTER XIV

Epilogue: The Reformation in England

The death of Mary was followed on the next day by that of Pole. The Romanist régime was over. Elizabeth set herself to the task of pacification with infinite tact and policy. Virtually she took Cranmer's scheme, and with slight modification made it her own. The Reformation, uncertain in its course before, stayed but rendered inevitable by Mary, became an accomplished fact. It only remained for Rome to widen the chasm—to confirm the hostility of the revolted nation; which, largely by the instrumentality of Douay, she very effectually did. Neither the details of the formal settlement nor its subsequent developments are within the scope of this volume; but it remains to state some general conclusions.

In England, more than elsewhere, the Reformation means two different things according to the point of view: the Reformation official and the Reformation popular.

The official Reformation is concerned with the Anglican body, with political and constitutional questions affecting its governing authority, its organisation, its control of temporalities, its dogmatic and ceremonial limitations.

The popular Reformation regards these things as in varying degrees accidents. Its essence lies in the application to religion of the peculiarly British doctrine of Liberty, which may be expressed in the formula, "I have a right to judge for myself and to insist on your agreeing with me"; with a corollary, that no foreigner has any business to interfere. This process results in a general horror, not of any logical system, but of two vague ideas labelled "Popery" and "Priestcraft"; so that whatsoever falls under either category stands *ipso facto* condemned.

Officially, then, the Reformation was in its primary stage political; it started from the rejection, by and on behalf of both the clergy and the temporal State, of any and every claim to authority in England put forward by the papal power.

In its constitutional aspect it dealt with the relations of Church and State; and here the fundamental characteristic of the Reformation is the unqualified assertion by the State of its right to control every branch of the ecclesiastical organisation. That the claim was made in great part on behalf of the Crown rather than of the State at large was due to the general political predominance of the Crown at the time. Hence, the sovereign claimed and enforced the power of controlling and appropriating ecclesiastical revenues, of nominating the bishops, of authorising formularies, of constituting ecclesiastical courts, of disallowing the proceedings of Convocation, of abolishing benefit of clergy. Some of these things were done by direct Royal authority, some by process of Parliament; all were effective expressions of the subordination of the ecclesiastical organisation to the temporal

Sovereign. How far these things had the assent of the clergy is another matter, and one which the State was free to ignore. From the point of view of the State, they were all merely the application in practice of theoretical rights always inherent in the Sovereign, though not always exercised and occasionally disputed.

In this theory of the supremacy of the temporal power the clergy were forced to acquiesce, however reluctantly. The real change which had come about was that the State had finally and decisively proved itself the stronger power. Hitherto the clergy had been able to do battle with the secular claims more or less successfully. The spiritual armoury of excommunication and penance had been matched against material weapons. Now, princes, nobles, and commons were ready to brave the ecclesiastical anathemas. However unwilling to admit the justice or the fitness of the new order, the clergy had no choice but submission to the accomplished fact. The secular was master of the spiritual.

But while this change was probably inevitable, it had been facilitated by the unwonted attitude of the foremost ecclesiastic in the country. No small share of the animosity to Cranmer so often displayed by that party in the Church which likes to label itself Catholic, is due to the sense that he was a traitor to his Order; that it was his prime duty to maintain its traditional rights; that he did in fact deliberately guide it to surrender.

Nearly four centuries before, another Henry was seated on the English throne. At his right hand was a devoted, even an unscrupulous follower, as active in

the king's support against the clergy as against the barons. Him the king made primate; and straightway Thomas of Canterbury became the champion of the Order, the most uncompromising claimant for its rights that it had ever known. The later Henry made no such blunder. He chose no militant aspirant to martyrdom; it may indeed be doubted whether such a man was to be found. Those who at a later date espoused the cause of Rome, now all supported Henry. At the time, Fisher was almost the only prelate with the convictions, the courage, and the ability for the part of a Becket; which was absolutely the last for which the new Thomas of Canterbury was fitted. His mind was of the strictly academic type, his temper of the most peaceable, his self-reliance greatly lacking. It never occurred to him to regard himself as the captain of a spiritual host, struggling for its rights against the encroachments of the secular power; before he was made primate, the Church was to him simply a branch of the State Service, and his view was rather confirmed than altered by his promotion. It is easier to forgive a Latimer, a free lance with a strong vein of Quixotism, or a Hooper who might almost be called a frank mutineer; but, unhappily for Cranmer, his interest lay on the side which he espoused, and his credit—very unfairly as it would seem—has suffered gravely in consequence.

This conception of the relation between the Sovereign and the ecclesiastical body was not Cranmer's creation; but it controlled his entire policy. As archbishop, he accounted himself the chief counsellor of the Crown in matters ecclesiastical; but he took for granted that the Crown was free to accept or reject

his advice and require him to obey its decisions. Sometimes the Crown was graciously pleased to yield to his representations, as in the publication of the open Bible and the increasing use of the vernacular in the Church services. Sometimes it gave him practically a free hand, as in the compilation of the reformed liturgy. Sometimes it trampled on his advice, as in the case of the Six Articles. But this was an episode. The significant fact is that the ultimate reconstruction shaped in accordance with Cranmer's ideas much more than with those of any other individual. How far his personal views on dogma developed in the direction of Geneva is a more or less open question; what he clearly did hold was, the legitimacy of divers contradictory opinions, the large range of the unessential. The comprehensiveness which was a political necessity in the eyes of Elizabeth and her secular counsellors had been but a just latitude in the eyes of Cranmer; yet there were few other Churchmen who would not have curtailed it if they could. However much this or that adviser or coadjutor dominated him on individual points, the whole outcome was and is to this day the expression of Cranmer's mind; far more than that of any other individual, school, or party in the Church. There were old doctrines which he would not exclude though he himself had shaken them off; there were new doctrines which he would not exclude though he was not himself persuaded of their truth. Such a man will never have the praise of partisans; but if he had not pointed the way, it is not easy to doubt that the Church would officially either have reverted to Rome or have become frankly Calvinist. As it was, it became deliberately comprehensive.

It is, indeed, obvious that there were numbers of the clergy who had no liking for this official form of Reformation; which might be summed up as rejecting papal authority, asserting secular supremacy, and, in questions of dogma and ritual, demanding only on one side the decisive negation of certain specified Roman doctrines and practices, and on the other the positive affirmation of very little more than is contained in the Apostles' Creed. As to papal authority, no doubt there was small room for question. As to secular supremacy, it could always be maintained that the clergy had never admitted the principle but only submitted to the material fact, and reserved the right to challenge any and every application of the State's claim to control. As to dogmas and ritual, there was plenty of opportunity for very one-sided interpretations. It was clear enough that any party becoming dominant would be able to pose for the time as the only truly representative group. To arrive at anything like an accurate apportionment of the distribution of the clergy among the varying schools under the Elizabethan settlement is not possible. That a few were resolute adherents of the old order is undeniable; and that a few were equally resolute adherents of the most advanced reformed type. But it can hardly be doubted that the bulk—at least until the pope chose to challenge the legitimacy of Elizabeth's government—had no very strong convictions beyond what was ground of common agreement: except a preference for whatever magnified their office on the one hand, and a repudiation of the rule of celibacy on the other. For the rest, they leaned to this side or that, according as their mental bias was conservative or advanced, until the ultra-

reformers were gradually drawn off by the rise of definite dissenting sects.

Perhaps the most curious feature of the method by which comprehensiveness was attained was ingenious ambiguity. The formularies do not commonly assert that either of two doctrines may be legitimately held, but they propound a doctrine in terms which may be translated in either of two or more ways. A theory has been invented that the true test of the interpretation is the supposed belief of the framer. Yet there can hardly be a question that the formularies were authorised precisely on account of their ambiguity. And here again we recognise the Cranmerian note. To take a specific instance—though the wording is not Cranmer's—everyone is agreed that the archbishop held that "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful at the Lord's Supper"—but the critics are entirely disagreed as to the *mode* of the Presence as he recognised it. At one end of the scale is a crudely thaumaturgic interpretation; at the other, a frankly rationalistic one: neither being acceptable, the alternative is some mystical one, which to a few minds conveys a definite meaning, but to most is a satisfying method of concealing from themselves that they themselves do not know what they mean. Cranmer, on this and on many other points, adopting himself a mystical interpretation, recognised that this could not be *necessary* since it could not be really grasped by the average intelligence; and preferred ambiguity to expressions involving the acceptance of either universally intelligible extreme.

In the rejection of the papal authority, the moving

force was Henry VIII., backed by the approval of the great bulk of his subjects, whether lay or cleric. In the assertion of the secular supremacy, the moving force was Thomas Cromwell, backed by the king, the bulk of the laity, and a few of the clergy headed by Cranmer. In the comprehensive character of the dogma and ritual of the reformed Church, Cranmer was the moving spirit; and his work, overthrown for a brief interval, was confirmed by the political necessities of Elizabeth's government. The circumstances of her birth made reconciliation with Rome a practical impossibility; while for many years the country could not venture to espouse the cause of militant Protestantism. Elizabeth herself needed to retain the loyalty to her own person both of the old Catholics and of the democratic Puritans. Each could find, not indeed complete satisfaction, but a reasonably acceptable compromise within the four corners of the Cranmerian formularies. The uniformity resulting was sufficient to meet the public convenience; its boundaries were marked enough to show that even comprehensiveness drew a line somewhere; while there was *prima facie* ground for holding suspect anyone who stood stubbornly outside. Political requirements coinciding with the martyred archbishop's religious theory, the reformed Church was established on a working basis.

What change it was that actually befell the Church at the Reformation is the subject of a wonderful amount of misrepresentation. Half a century ago, it was possible for a responsible historian to write as if one Church was abolished and another established in its place. To-day it is perhaps more common to

find it suggested that the Anglican Church has been one and unchanged from the earliest times; that the Reformation was merely her repudiation of foreign doctrines which Rome had endeavoured to thrust upon her.

The fact is that the pre-Reformation Church was an institution absolutely unique in history. There are no analogies; there is nothing similar to argue from. The theory of the relation between the ecclesiastical organisation and the State was never worked out. The conditions under which that organisation held and administered property were never examined. Her relation to other religious bodies was never in question, because no separate religious bodies were allowed to exist.

The official political theory underlying the Reformation was, that the Church was essentially *national*; that in any country professing Christianity and ruled by a Christian prince, the Church was the nation itself in its spiritual aspect, as the State is the nation in its secular aspect. The clergy were the duly appointed ministers of the Church, as civil functionaries are the duly appointed ministers of the State. To them, in the natural course, belonged the administration of lands and revenues consecrated to religion; but these were the actual property of the whole of the nation *qua* Church, not of the clergy. Now, inasmuch as there cannot exist in one nation two co-ordinate dominions, but one must ultimately have authority over the other, either the State must have ultimate control of the Church, or the Church of the State: a dilemma in practice admitting of only one answer. It follows then that the clergy can claim to direct and

administer the Church only so far as the State thinks right to permit. It follows also that changes in the religious judgments of the nation, or in the conditions of admission to the ministry of the Church, do not affect the continuity either of the Church or of the ministerial body. It follows also that the State can either recognise or reject the necessity of a particular ceremony—such as the laying on of hands—in the appointment of ministers. By insistence on the practice, the "apostolic succession" has in fact been maintained; yet—according to the hypothesis—the continuity of the ministry would not have been interfered with by its rejection.

Now this theory of the Unity of the Church and the nation—*teres atque rotundus* from an academic point of view—could never have appealed to practical sentiment. "The Church" meant, and to this day means in common parlance, the clergy. The man who handed over broad acres to the Church had in his mind no idea of endowing the nation. Apart from gifts which were in reality merely ingenious evasions of feudal imposts, he intended, as a rule, to conciliate the powers who could modify his purgatorial experiences; or else he desired his wealth to be specifically devoted to education or to charity. Systematic education and systematic charity were entirely in the hands of the clerical organisation. It may be assumed that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the pious donor would in fact have been shocked beyond words at the idea of any but the clergy having control of his donations, and that he intended them primarily to be the beneficiaries. It is reasonable, however, to argue that those who were particularly interested in an

educational or charitable disposition of their property had only made the clergy trustees of the same because they formed the only existing organisation for the administration of such trusts; and also that a firm belief in the efficacy of purchase-money as a passport through purgatory, together with sundry other pious opinions which the reformed Church declared to be erroneous or superstitious, had been important factors in directing donations. From all of these arguments, setting aside the academic theory of Church and State, the conclusions might be derived: that much of the wealth in the hands of the clergy had been procured by means of obsolete claims to influence over the peace or otherwise of the departed; much also out of a piety which would have accounted many of the reformed doctrines as heretical, not to say blasphemous; much because, at the time of the donations, no other organisation existed for carrying out the intentions of the donor. From which again would be deduced the right of the State to intervene, and control or supplant the ecclesiastical administration of property so acquired.

Again, however, the point must be insisted on, that while the State could lay down the law and demand the official acquiescence of the clergy thereto, yet it was always open to the latter to declare that their rights were sacred and indefeasible; that their abdication even if it had been voluntary was *ultra vires*—just as, by way of illustration, parents cannot sign away the right to keep their children—and that as a matter of fact it was not voluntary but compulsory. No precedents, no admissions, and no submissions can apply in dealing with the proposition that the clerical

hierarchy is of divine appointment, subordinate to the secular authority only in virtue of the right asserted by might; and that to lay secular hands on what has been confided to the care of that hierarchy is sacrilege, albeit the State might exhibit grounds both theoretical and practical for its intervention.

The Reformation in its popular aspect requires separate consideration.

The mind of the ordinary Englishman is not interested in abstract propositions; and he contemplates reforms with an eye strictly directed to their practical results. He has an affection for the things to which he is accustomed, and looks with suspicion upon innovations. His attitude towards the Reformation in its earlier stages seems to have been entirely in accord with his usual character.

The movement, regarded as anti-papal, was sure of popular support, on the general ground that the pope is a foreigner. Regarded as anti-clerical, it was received with a divided mind. Fanatics, of course, railed at the vices of the clergy in unmeasured terms; but a popular gathering was quite as likely to duck the fanatic in a horse-pond as to applaud him. The wealth of the monastic orders might excite envy; but as landlords they were generally preferred to the nobles. Clerical immunities under the law were offensive not as a rule to the populace so much as to jurists, since the clergy were always disposed to strain to the utmost the inclusiveness of their protective jurisdiction; and, in respect of many offences, popular sympathy —with the Draconian punishments in vogue, as described in the introduction to *Utopia*—was habitually on the side of the law-breakers. Roughly speaking,

the unpopularity of the regular clergy varied very much with the character of the foundations in a particular locality; the attack on them was rarely received with local enthusiasm; and in both North and West the risings showed clearly that the official movement had entirely outrun the popular sentiment.

Theologically, as we have seen, even the official attitude had scarcely undergone modification when Edward came to the throne; and it is obvious that the active reformation during his reign was by no means to the popular taste. Dialectically, its most vigorous promoters were foreigners, such as Peter Martyr; practically, it was enforced by an oligarchy which showed little intelligence and less character, whether under the leadership of Somerset or of Warwick. In the large towns and in the eastern counties, always in later years the strongholds of Puritanism, the new doctrines were popular, and on their destructive side were no doubt highly attractive to the 'prentice element; but in the North and West the ancient ways continued to find favour.

To all appearance, then, on Mary's accession the populace in general was quite prepared to return to the old ways, and particularly to be rid of the foreigners who had been busily engaged in administering well-meant but irritating advice and rebuke. There was a prompt exodus of these persons; and it seemed at the first start of the new reign that, though of course the return to power of the Conservative party would involve the changing of a good many seats, clemency was to be the order of the day. But then the face of things changed. The Germans and Switzers had flown; but Spaniards and Italians took

their place. The Spanish marriage, despite all safeguards, was ominously suggestive of a foreign domination; the royal attitude towards the papal supremacy was opposed to popular feeling. The English Bible had been by this time widely enough circulated to create a formidable body of religious opinion derived from the direct study of the Scriptures. The fires of persecution were kindled: the highest Church dignitaries were struck down; martyrs conspicuous for high character, white-haired elders, raw lads and tender women, went rejoicing to the stake. Fear, horror, righteous rage, sprang up in the hearts of a people ready enough to be indifferent to the subject-matter of religious controversy; and a hot hatred of all that could be branded as "popery" took a deep and abiding root. The Marian persecution made the country at large passionately Protestant: and the seal was set on the Protestant Reformation of the people by the policy of the popes and of Spain; forcing the entire country to take sides with the Protestant peoples and parties on the Continent, even when abstaining from actual hostilities.

In this sense of the word, the Elizabethan clergy were no less emphatic than the laity in claiming the name of Protestant; to which, however, a quite different sense has been given in latter-day controversy. But while the clergy, and more particularly the higher clergy, constantly tended more and more definitely to the Catholic party which had diverged least from Rome—the Crown conceiving that its own dignity and that of the prelacy were intimately bound up together—the tendency of the Reformation among the laity was more and more to Protestantism of the pro-

nounced Puritan type. The study of the Bible increased, and men, deriving their religious ideas from it directly, found therein no *prima facie* sanction for elaborate ritual, or for regarding the priest as a necessary intermediary between the man and his Maker. However much attached the people might be to traditional observances and customs, however much opposed to ranters, however loyal to Church as against Dissent, a change took place at the Reformation which may significantly be expressed in a phrase—the Priest to his flock had become the Parson.

Had matters rested here, it may be that no distinction would ever have needed to be drawn between the Anglican and the National Reformation; the Elizabethan settlement would have covered the field. But the forces at work were not to be so easily laid to rest. A new phase of the Reformation was in course of evolution, a phase associated with other names; which developed into the struggles of sectaries under the Stuarts, and the division of Protestants into Churchmen and Dissenters. The reconciliation of Catholicism and Puritanism could never be more than partial. The peculiar achievement of Cranmer lay in his framing a *modus vivendi* so effectively inclusive in its scope that Laud could rule the same Church whose children in later generations were brought up on the *Pilgrim's Progress*; that Church which a few years since included among her sons Lord Shaftsbury, Doctor Pusey, and Dean Stanley.

INDEX

Absolution, 8.
Abuses, 8.
Abused images, 120, 122.
Acts of Parliament passed—
Annates, restraint of (α), 57, 64.
,, ,, (β), 66.
,, to Crown, 57, 68.
Appeals, restraint of, 55, 57, 64.
Appeals and Submission, 66.
Articles, Six, 84, 91, 98, 121, 129, 147.
Benefit of Clergy, 63.
Chantries, 78, 121.
Congé d'élire, 66.
Heresy laws revived, 150.
Marriage of Clergy, 125.
Mortmain, 64.
Mortuaries, 58.
Peter Pence, 66.
Pluralities, 58.
Probate, 58.
Repeal of Edward's laws, 145.
,, Henry's laws, 150.
Revival of heresy laws, 150.
Royal Proclamations, 79, 119.
Six Articles, 84, 91, 98, 121, 129, 147.
Submission of Clergy, 66.
Succession (α), 66, 67.
,, (β), 68.
Suppression of Monasteries (α), 76.
Suppression of Monasteries (β), 77.
Supremacy, 68.
Treasons, 68, 70, 121.
Acts of Parliament—*continued.*
Uniformity (α), 125.
,, (β), 137.
Adrian VI., 30.
Alasco, 132.
Alexander VI., 3, 49.
Altar, sacrament of. *See* Eucharist.
Altar war, 132.
Ambiguity, 181.
America, 17.
Anabaptists, 29, 85.
Anarchism, 19, 84.
Annates, 57.
,, Acts. *See* Acts of Parliament.
Anne Boleyn. *See* Boleyn.
Anne of Cleves, 79, 98.
Antinomians, 85, 117.
Apostolic succession, 93, 139.
Appeals, restraint of. *See* Acts.
,, to General Councils. *See* Councils.
Aquinas, Thomas, 14.
Arthur, Prince, 36.
Articles, Six, 84, 91, 98, 121, 129, 147.
,, Ten, 89.
,, Thirty-Nine, 137, 140.
,, Forty-Two, 137, 140.
Aske, Robert, 77.
Augsburg, Confession, 33.
,, Diet ('30), 32.
,, ,, ('48), 100, 108.
,, ,, ('55), 110.
,, Interim of, 100, 108.
,, Peace of, 110.
Augustine, Saint, 25.

Baptism, 89, 93.
Barlow, 90, 93.
Becket, 11, 177.
Beggers, Supplicacyon for the, 4, 5.
Benefit of clergy, 63, 71.
Bible. *See* Translations.
Bishops' Book, 90.
Bishoprics, new, 77.
Black Book, 75, 76.
Black Rubric, 138.
Boleyn, Anne, 30, 38, 45, 55, 69.
Bologna, 108.
Bonner, 87, 113, 121, 135, 144, 149, 152, 154, 169.
Borgias, 3, 48.
Bradford, 152, 167.
Breviary, 124.
Brigittines, 68.
Bucer, 131, 136, 138.
Burke and More, 85.

Calvin, John, 24, 33, 106, 107, 108.
Calvinism, 100, 107, 115, 126.
Cambridge, 20, 42, 131.
Campeggio, 40.
Canon Law, 60-62, 91, 136.
Caraffa, 110.
Cardinal College, 22, 73.
Carlstadt, 29.
Carthusians, 68, 73.
Catherine of Aragon, 30, 36, 55. *See* Divorce.
Catherine Howard, 79.
Catherine Parr, 112.
Catholics, 188.
Catholicity, 163.
Cecil, 127.
Celibacy, 91, 92, 117, 147.
Ceremonies, 89, 118, 135, 139.
Chantries, 78, 121.
Chapters, 78.
Charles v.—
  becomes Emperor, 26.
  political attitude, 28.
  Worms, 26, 28.
  marriage, 30.
  sack of Rome, 32.
  reconciliation with Rome, 32.
  compromise with League, 33.
Charles v.—*continued.*
  the central figure, 99.
  attitude on Councils, 101.
  attacks the League, 100.
  attacked by Maurice, 109.
  abdication, 110.
  miscellaneous, 152.
Charterhouse. *See* Carthusians.
Christian Man, Erudition of a. *See* King's Book.
Christian Man, Institution of a. *See* Bishops' Book.
Church. *See* Clergy, Ecclesiastical, etc.
Clement vii.—
  accession, 30.
  anti-Imperial, 31.
  sack of Rome, 32.
  reconciliation with Charles, 32.
  on the divorce, 40.
  Divorce Commission, 40.
  revokes trial to Rome, 40.
  condemns divorce, 57.
  objection to Council, 101.
  miscellaneous, 100.
Clergy—
  charges against, 4 ff.
  Colet's charges, 21.
  on the Continent, 7.
  in England, 7–11.
  worldliness, 10, 21.
  independence of Rome, 4, 10, 54.
  taxation, 11.
  endowments, 52.
  anti-papal attitude, 52, 54.
  under præmunire, 59.
  submission of, 62, 66.
  seculars and regulars, 74.
  marriage of, 91, 125.
  under Elizabeth, 180.
  See Convocation and Ecclesiastical.
Cleves, Anne of, 79, 98.
Colet, John—
  early days, 12.
  in Italy, 12, 13.
  lectures, 13.
  Dean of St. Paul's, 15.
  address to Convocation, 21.
  charges against clergy, 21.

Colet, John—*continued.*
attacked for heresy, 21.
St. Paul's school, 22.
death, 22.
miscellaneous, 6, 19, 85.
Cologne, Archbishop of, 124.
Columbus, 17.
Commissions. *See* Canon Law, Communion, Prayer-Book, Visitations, Windsor.
Communion, order of, 122, 123.
Communism, 85.
Comperta, 76.
Comprehension, 141, 142, 179, 182.
Conference of Ratisbon, 102, 103.
Congé d'élire, 66.
Conscience, freedom of, 80, 82, 176.
Constantinople, fall of, 2.
Consubstantiation, 115, 134.
Contarini, 102, 103, 116.
Continuity, 142, 183.
Convocation—
Colet and Convocation, 20 ff.
on divorce, 56.
on General Councils, 56.
subsidies, 59.
supremacy clause, 59.
answers to supplication, 61, 62.
compulsory submission, 62.
petitions for translation, 87.
,, against heretical books, 87.
,, for revision, 88.
,, for communion in both kinds, 121.
,, for marriage, 121.
,, for representation, 122.
,, for Commission on Ecclesiastical Laws, 122.
authorises King's Book, 93.
rejects Homilies, 119.
not consulted, 125, 138, 140.
reaction in, 145.
Council of Regency, 111.
Council of Trent. *See* Trent.
Councils, General, appeals to, by—
Cranmer, 56, 101, 169.
Henry VIII., 56, 101.
Luther, 25, 101.
Councils, General, attitude towards, of—
Charles V., 32, 101.
Clement VII., 101.
Convocation, 56.
Julius III., 109.
Luther, 27, 101, 102.
Paul III., 101, 102.
Protestants, 101, 102.
Counter-Reformation, 108.
Courage, 172.
Covenanters, 155.
Coverdale, 87, 145.
Cranmer's *Career*—
early years, 20, 42.
appeal to universities, 44.
brought to court, 45.
sent to Italy, 46, 55.
sent to Germany, 46, 55, 58.
marriage, 42, 91.
selected for primacy, 46.
installation, 46, 55.
oaths of obedience, 55.
pronounces divorce, 56.
appeals to General Council, 56.
pleads for More, 68.
surrenders Anne, 69, 164.
surrenders Cromwell, 70, 164.
presses for Bible, 87.
English Litany, 88.
shares in Ten Articles, 89.
shares in Bishop's Book, 90.
shares in King's Book, 92.
opposes Six Articles, 92.
coronation sermon, 113, 118.
introduces Homilies, 118, 119.
shares in First Prayer-Book, 124.
debates on Act of Uniformity, 131.
book on the Sacrament, 133.
shares in *Reformatio*, 137.
resists Nonconformists, 138.
Edward's will, 144, 165.
repudiates the Mass, 145, 166, 169.
sent to the Tower, 145, 166.
removed to Oxford, 167.
disputation there, 167.
summoned to Rome, 167.
trial at Oxford, 167, 168.
condemnation by pope, 168.

Cranmer's *Career—continued.*
asks to confer, 169.
first submission, 169.
second submission, 169.
appeal to General Council, 169, 170.
third submission, 170.
fourth submission, 170.
removed to Christ Church, 170.
first recantation, 170.
second recantation, 171.
in St. Mary's Church, 172.
at the stake, 174.
miscellaneous, 11, 98, 111, 114, 116, 130, 135, 152.
Cranmer's *Character—*
dominated by Henry, 69, 70, 164.
amiability, 69.
innocence, 45, 68.
lack of self-confidence, 63, 69, 164, 165.
consistency, 81.
learning, 124, 133.
breadth of view, 161.
timidity, 42.
need of affection, 169.
moral traits, 43, 45, 46, 51, 69, 96.
mental traits, 43, 45, 124, 178.
courage and weakness, 81, 92, 145, 158, 160, 162, 166, 171.
vacillation, 81, 132.
condemnatory views, 159.
Cranmer's *Policy and Views—*
the divorce, 44.
supremacy, 44, 65, 80, 81, 93, 160.
obedience, 65, 81, 93, 94, 167.
the open Bible, 87.
English Liturgy, 88.
apostolic succession, 93, 139.
secular control, 65, 80, 93, 161.
conformity, 82.
images, 118.
sacraments, 131, 134.
dogmatic comprehension, 142, 179, 181.
attitude to Rome, 44, 55.
,, to the Crown, 177.
,, to Lutherans, 126, 131.
Cranmer's attitude to Calvinists, 131, 179.
attitude to heresy, 160.
review of his policy, 141, 142, 179.
results of his policy, 182.
condemnatory views, 65, 161.
Cromwell, Thomas—
early years, 48.
Italian influences, 48, 49.
in Wolsey's service, 50.
loyalty, 50, 51.
corruption, 50.
in Henry's service, 51.
policy, 54, 74.
character, 47, 50.
vicar-general, 70.
visitation of monasteries, 75, 77.
Bible, 87, 89.
German policy, 79, 98.
fall, 70, 79.
miscellaneous, 11, 58, 59, 95, 98.

Day, 135, 140.
Deprivation of bishops, 146.
,, of clergy, 147.
Diets. *See* Augsburg, Ratisbon, Spires, Worms.
Dissent, 118, 181, 189.
Divorce, the—
marriages, 36.
dispensation, 36.
arguments for, 36, 37.
,, against, 37.
Henry's perturbation, 38.
public attitude, 39.
papal commission, 40.
failure of proceedings, 40.
universities, 44, 54.
Cranmer, 44.
Convocation, 56.
divorce pronounced, 56.
condemned by pope, 57.
Douay, 175.
Dudley. *See* Warwick.
Duns, 14.

Eastern counties, 107, 128, 187.
Ecclesiastical courts, 21, 60.
,, endowments, 76, 77, 78.

Ecclesiastical independence, 4, 10.
,, nationalism, 4, 183.
,, polity, theories of, 11, 81, 176, 183–186.
See Clergy and Convocation.
Economic conditions, 18, 128.
Education, 22, 121.
Edward VI.—
accession, 111.
government under, 127, 140.
will, 143.
death, 109, 144.
Elector of Saxony, 26.
Elizabeth, 111, 127, 141, 175, 182.
Endowments, 76–78.
English Bible, 86–88, 141.
services, 88, 120, 123–125, 141.
traits, 4, 186.
Erasmus—
at Oxford, 15.
in London, 16.
at Cambridge, 20, 42.
his *Praise of Folly*, 17.
his New Testament, 15, 19, 42, 85.
his *Paraphrase*, 118, 119, 120.
contrasted with Luther, 23.
advice to Frederic, 26.
miscellaneous, 11, 19, 29, 35.
Erudition of a Christian Man. *See* King's Book.
Eucharist, theories of, 114 ff., 134.
Exeter, 129.
Exempt monasteries, 72.

Faith, justification by, 102, 116.
Ferdinand of Austria, 31.
Ferdinand of Spain, 36.
Ferrar, 152.
Fifteenth century, 2.
Fish, Simon, 4, 6.
Fisher, 6, 20, 22, 40, 46, 54, 67, 68, 160, 178.
Fitzjames, 20, 21.
Florence, 3, 12.
Foreigners, 126, 131, 145, 187.
Formularies. *See s.v.*
Forty-Two Articles, 137, 140.
Foxe, 43, 90.
Francis I., 28, 30, 99, 102, 103, 107.
Frederic of Saxony, 26, 28, 31.
Freedom of conscience, 80, 82, 176.
Frith, 85.
Frundsberg, 32.
Froude, J. A., 47.

Garcia, 169, 171.
Gardiner—
at Rome, 40, 44.
answers the supplication, 61.
Bible, 87.
excluded from council, 111.
in opposition, 113.
challenges Cranmer, 120.
in prison, 121, 135.
on the sacrament, 133, 134.
Chancellor, 146.
Spanish marriage, 146.
reactionary, 148.
the persecution, 150, 152.
miscellaneous, 22, 46, 57, 90, 123.
Geneva, 24, 100, 108.
Grace, pilgrimage of, 77, 90.
Greek, 14.
Grey, Lady Jane, 143, 146.
Grocyn, 12.

Hales, 144, 165.
Heath, 135, 140.
Henri II., 99.
Henry II., 11, 177.
Henry V., 2.
Henry VII., 16, 35.
Henry VIII.—
accession, 16.
character, 16, 35, 95.
traits, 28, 45, 51.
scruples, 31, 38.
anti-papal policy, 31.
orthodoxy, 37, 82.
ruthlessness, 68.
affection for Cranmer, 91, 95, 166.
aim of his reformation, 53, 64, 80, 94.
will, 111, 143.
obsequies, 113.
miscellaneous, 11, 28, 123, 126.
Heresy laws revived, 150.
Heretical books, 58, 87.

Heretics, attacks on, 21, 53, 84.
Hertford. *See* Somerset.
Homilies, Book of, 118, 119, 120.
Hooper, 133, 136, 138, 140, 145, 152, 157, 167.
Huguenots, 24, 107.
Huss, 25.
Hythloday, 19.

Iconoclasm, 83, 118, 120, 141.
Idolatry, 10, 118.
Ignatius. *See* Loyola.
Images, 9, 83, 117, 120, 122.
Independence. *See* Ecclesiastical.
Indulgences, 24.
Informers, 70.
Injunctions, 120.
Inquisition, 106.
Institutes of Calvin, 106.
Institution of a Christian Man. *See* Bishops' Book.
Insurrections. *See* Risings.
Intention, 139.
Interim of Augsburg, 100, 108.
Irreverence, 131, 135.
Italy, 2, 14, 48.

Jesuits, order of, 100, 104, 108, 155.
  founded, 105.
  organisation, 106.
  ethics, 106.
  education, 106.
  influence, 106.
Joan of Arc, 2.
Julius ii., 36, 49.
Julius iii., 109, 110.
Justification by faith, 102, 116.

Ket, 128, 129.
King's Book, 92, 125.
Kneeling at Communion, 138.
Knox, John, 133, 136, 138, 140, 142.

Laity and Reformation, 41, 130, 144, 186.
Langton, Stephen, 5.
Laski. *See* Alasco.
Latimer, 22, 75, 85, 90, 130, 132, 152, 157, 158, 167, 168.
Latitude. *See* Comprehension.
Layton, 75, 76, 79.
Legates, papal, 11, 58, 148, 149.
Leigh, 75, 76, 79.
Leo x., 22, 24, 29, 30, 49.
Liberty of conscience, 80, 82, 176.
Licences to bishops, 166.
Licensed preachers, 79, 122.
Linacre, 12.
Lincolnshire rising, 76.
Lisle, Lord. *See* Warwick.
Litany, 88, 120.
Liturgy, 88, 124, 174. *See* Prayer-Book.
Lollardry, 1, 20, 128, 155.
Londoners, 154.
Louis xi., 2.
Loyola, Ignatius, 104–106.
Luther—
  his personality, 23.
  challenges Tetzel, 25.
  appeals to General Council, 25.
  appeals to nationalism, 26.
  burns the pope's Bull, 26.
  at Worms, 27.
  after Worms, 27, 29.
  opposes Peasants' War, 29, 84.
  attitude to General Council, 27, 101.
  attitude to Ratisbon Conference, 103.
  death, 33, 97, 100.
  miscellaneous, 35, 49, 107, 124.
Lutheran doctrines, 115, 116, 134.
Lutheran League. *See* Schmalkald.

Machiavelli, 18, 48.
Marriage of clergy, 91, 125.
Martyr, Peter, 131, 136, 138.
Martyrdoms—
  Bradford, 152.
  Cranmer, 152.
  Ferrar, 152.
  Frith, 85.
  Hooper, 152, 167.
  Latimer, 152.
  Ridley, 152.
  Rogers, 151, 157, 167.
  Saunders, 152.
  Taylor, 152, 158, 167.

Mary—
accession, 144.
moderation, 144.
coronation, 145.
Spanish negotiations, 146.
Wyatt's rebellion, 146.
severity, 146, 147.
marriage, 110.
religious policy, 148, 149, 153.
character, 151.
death, 174.
miscellaneous, 30, 36, 38, 111.
Mass, 114, 144, 145, 156.
Maurice of Saxony, 99, 100, 109.
Melanchthon, 33, 103, 160.
Monasteries, 6.
attacks on, 73.
visitations, 75, 77.
evidence against, 75.
suppressions, 22, 73, 76, 77.
Monasticism, 9, 71–73.
Montmartre, 105, 106.
More, Sir Thomas—
at Oxford, 12, 14.
under Henry VII. 16.
Wolsey, 51.
the *Utopia*, 17 ff., 186.
as reactionary, 19, 29, 84.
Chancellor, 19, 51, 84.
resignation, 63.
on supremacy, 67, 68.
imprisonment, 68.
death, 68.
miscellaneous, 15, 37, 46, 54, 85, 160.
Mortmain. *See* Statutes and Acts.
Morton, Cardinal, 73.
Mortuaries Act, 58.
Mühlberg, 100.
Münzer, 29.

New Learning, 3, 12–14, 26.
Nonconformists, 138, 140.
Nonconformity, 136.
Northumberland. *See* Warwick.

Observants, 68, 73.
Opportunism, 127.
Orders, 93.
Ordinal, 139.
Ordinaries, supplication against the, 60.
Osiander, 91.
Oxford, 13–15, 131, 141.

Paget, 112.
Pallium, 7.
Panic, 158.
Papal jurisdiction in England, 10.
Paraphrase of Erasmus, 118, 119, 120.
Parliament—
Acts of. *See* Acts.
Marian, 147.
Reformation, 58 ff.
Parr, Catherine, 112.
Passau, peace of, 109.
Paul III., 100, 101, 102, 103, 109.
Paul IV., 110, 167, 168.
Pavia, 30, 38.
Peasants' War (German), 19, 29, 84, 128.
Penance, 89, 93, 117.
Persecution under—
Henry, 85.
Mary, 151 ff., 154, 157.
miscellaneous, 155.
Peter Martyr, 131, 136, 138.
Peter Pence, 66.
Philip II., 110, 149, 152.
Pilgrimage of Grace, 77, 90.
Pius IV., 110.
Plato, 14, 17.
Pluralities, 21, 58.
Pole, 102, 116, 149, 152, 153, 169, 174.
Polity, ecclesiastical. *See* Ecclesiastical.
Popery, 156, 176.
Popes. *See sub nomine.*
Præmunire, 6, 11, 58, 121.
Praise of Folly, 17.
Prayer-Book, First, 123, 124, 125, 138.
Prayer-Book, Second, 137, 138.
Preachers, licensed, 79, 122.
,, suspension of, 123.
Presence, Real, 89, 115, 133.
Priestcraft, 176.
Priesthood, 8.

Prince, the, 18, 48.
Printing, 2.
Probate Act, 58.
Proclamations Act, 79.
Protector. *See* Somerset.
Protest of Spires, 32, 97.
Protestant League. *See* Schmalkald.
Protestantism, 32, 33, 103.
Provisors, Statute of, 11.
Pulpits, tuning the, 79.
Purgatory, 8, 89, 117.
Puritans, 24.
Puritanism, 33, 107.

QUIGNON'S breviary, 124.

RATIONALE, the, 94.
Ratisbon, 102, 103.
Reaction against reform, 144 ff., 187.
,, against persecution, 156, 188.
Real Presence. *See* Presence.
Rebellions. *See* Risings.
Recantations, 170.
Reconciliation with Rome, 110, 150.
"Reformatio Legum," 137.
Reformation, character of—
general, 23.
counter-, 108.
Edward's, 141.
Elizabeth's, 182.
Henry's, 64, 65, 83.
Luther's, 24.
Swiss, 107.
Reformation, influence on, of—
Calvin, 24, 107, 126.
Cranmer, 142, 163, 179.
Elizabeth, 182.
Henry, 52, 53, 80.
Hooper, 138.
Jesuits, 106.
Knox, 138.
Luther, 23, 24, 126.
Mary, 151, 188.
Ridley, 142.
Spain, 152, 156, 188.
Zwingli, 24.
Regency, Council of, 111.
Relics, 9, 71, 83.
Restraint of Appeals. *See* Acts.
Rich, 112.
Ridley, 116, 131, 133, 134, 135, 142, 145, 152, 157, 165, 167, 168.
Risings—
Cornish, 122.
Ket's, 128, 129, 130.
Lincolnshire, 76.
Northumberland's, 144.
Peasants' (German), 19, 29, 84, 128.
Pilgrimage of Grace, 77, 90.
Western, 128, 129, 130.
Wyatt's, 146.
Rogers, 151, 152, 157, 167.
Rome, sack of, 32.
Rubric, Black, 138.

SACRAMENTARIAN, 131.
Sacraments, what are, 89, 93. *See* Eucharist, etc.
Saints, invocation of, 89.
St. Paul's school, 22.
Sarum, Use of, 124.
Saunders, 152.
Savonarola, 3, 12, 13.
Saxony, Dukes of, 99.
,, Electors of, 26, 99.
Schmalkaldic League—
formation, 33.
growth, 99.
relations with England, 79, 91, 98.
war with Emperor, 100.
Mühlberg, 100.
Scholasticism, 2, 10, 13.
Schools, 121, 141.
Secular control. *See* Ecclesiastical polity.
Seymour, Jane, 69, 111.
,, of Sudeley, 112, 130.
Shaxton, 90.
Six Articles. *See* Articles.
Somerset, 112, 130, 140.
Soto, 169.
Sovereignty, 81.
Spain, 110, 152, 156, 188.
Spanish alliance, 35, 37.

Spanish marriage, 110, 145, 148.
Spires, Diets of (α) 31 ; (β) 32.
,, protest of, 32, 97.
Statutes—
Mortmain, 11, 64.
Præmunire, 11.
Provisors, 11.
Stokesley, 63, 87, 90.
Submission of Clergy, 62, 66.
Submissions of Cranmer, 169, 170.
Succession, questions of, 38, 67, 111, 142.
Succession, Act of (α), 66, 67.
,, ,, (β), 68.
,, apostolic, 93, 139.
Superstitious practices, 83, 122.
Supplicacyon for the Beggers, 4, 5.
Supplication against ordinaries, 60.
,, for reconciliation with Rome, 149.
Supremacy, Act of, 68.
,, Clause, 59.
,, Oath of, 68.
,, theory of. *See* Ecclesiastical polity.
Swiss reformers. *See* Calvin and Zwingli.

Taxation of clergy, 11.
Taylor of Hadleigh, 152, 158, 167.
Temporal control. *See* Ecclesiastical polity.
Ten Articles. *See* Articles.
Tetzel, 25.
Theocracy, 81.
Thirlby, 169.
Toleration, theory of, 19.
Translation of Bible—
Commissions for, 87, 88.
Coverdale's, 87.
Great Bible, 87.
Luther's, 86.
Matthew's, 87, 151.
Tyndale's, 86.
Wiclif's, 86.
Transubstantiation, 89, 91, 92, 114, 125, 133, 155.
Treasons Acts, 68, 70, 121.
Trent, Council of—
convoked, 103.
opened, 103.
not œcumenical, 103.
removed, 108.
restored, 109.
suspended, 109.
concluded, 110.
Tunstall, 22, 113, 123, 135, 169.
Turks, 2, 33, 97.
Tyndale, 86.

Uniformity, First Act, 125.
,, Second Act, 137.
Universities, appeal to, 44, 54.
Use of Sarum, 124.
Utopia, the, 17–19, 186.

Visitations, 75, 77, 119, 149.
Vulgate, 14, 20.

Wards, Bill of, 60.
Warham, 6, 20, 21, 22, 40, 51, 55, 59, 63, 73.
Warwick, 112, 130, 140, 143, 144.
Western rising. *See* Risings.
Wiclif, 1, 25, 86.
Wiltshire, Earl of, 45, 46.
Windsor Commission, 122 ff.
Wittenberg, 25, 33.
Wolsey, 21, 22, 28, 30, 38, 39, 46, 58, 95.
Worms, Diet of, 26–28, 30.
,, Edict of, 28.
Wriothesly, 112.

Xavier, François, 105.

Zurich, 33.
Zwingli, 24, 33, 107, 115.

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